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First Committee

10th Meeting
Monday, 21 October 1996, 3.00 p.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Alyaksandr Sychou ..... (Belarus)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda items 60 to 81 (*continued*)

General debate on all disarmament and international security items

Mr. Pérez-Otermin (Uruguay) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I am addressing the First Committee during a session of the General Assembly that will be remembered for the historic opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), an instrument that culminates an important stage in the denuclearization process, and more specifically definitive nuclear disarmament.

That process saw its turning point during the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, when a significant number of States took the initiative that ultimately produced two resolutions: 50/65, which called on the Conference on Disarmament to conclude a multilateral, verifiable instrument so as to enable its signature by the outset of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly; and 50/70 A, which deplored the nuclear testing that had been carried out in the course of 1995. Uruguay participated actively in that process, as it was one of the first countries to support Australia's initiative aimed at the adoption by the General Assembly of the text of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. That initiative ultimately enjoyed the support of an overwhelming majority of Member States.

The adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, although an important achievement on the road towards denuclearization, is only a first step. We duly appreciate the agreement and understand that it makes possible aspirations for a commitment to eliminate nuclear testing from this day on. Furthermore, we appreciate the significance this will have for international cooperation, in particular in the area of verification. Nevertheless, we continue to have certain doubts concerning the complicated process of its entry into force and the fact that nuclear testing that does not involve explosions may continue to take place.

The process of denuclearization must be pursued further. The beginning of the review process of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), scheduled for 1997, should, *inter alia*, give fresh impetus to our work to reduce nuclear arsenals. The renewed efforts to bring about a nuclear-free world by means of a decisive reduction in the arsenals of nuclear-weapon States should not be limited to the successes we have already seen, such as the CTBT and the indefinite extension of the NPT. Completion of the preparatory work for the Review Conference of the NPT, to be held in the year 2000, should be given our enthusiastic support.

Another point worthy of mention in the debate of this Committee is the historic advisory opinion handed down by the International Court of Justice on 8 July. In that opinion, the highest international judicial body stated that the threat or use of nuclear weapons contravenes the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and is accordingly contrary to international law, and in particular to the principles and rules of international humanitarian law. The Court also underscored the obligation of States to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament. This important pronouncement by the highest

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legal body of the United Nations system is a milestone that will, from now on, provide a framework for discussions within this Organization and in the area of treaty law.

As concerns nuclear-weapon-free zones, we would like to express our satisfaction at the progress made since the signing of the treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones in South-East Asia and in Africa. The signature of the Protocols to the Rarotonga Treaty by France, the United Kingdom and the United States, which means that all five nuclear-weapon States are now parties to the Treaty, is of particular importance.

Through the declaration of geographic regions as nuclear-weapon-free zones, we have reached a point where the entire southern hemisphere and certain adjacent areas are now free of all nuclear-weapon-related activities. Taken together, the Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok, Pelindaba and Antarctic treaties mean that we are now on the road to freeing the southern hemisphere from such activities as the development, testing, deployment, stockpiling, transfer and use of nuclear weapons.

In this respect, we should give our full support to Brazil's proposal to recognize this trend, an initiative that also falls within the context of other activities of the special sessions of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and in particular of the resolution of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which helped to establish this kind of arrangement as one of the major instruments of international peace and security.

With respect to conventional weapons, we would note that, in principle, Uruguay supports the proposal of the delegation of Germany with respect to mine-clearance in areas of ongoing peacekeeping operations. This kind of weapon, which has been rightly described as small-scale arms of mass destruction, continues to cause irreversible damage and to claim lives on a daily basis well after conflicts have ended. Minefields, the end result of the use of millions of mines all over the world, constitute one of the most important challenges to our work to rebuild societies in post-conflict periods.

Uruguay's contingents have had to confront the risks involved in mine-clearance activities, have suffered the effects of anti-personnel landmines, including casualties in Angola, Mozambique and Western Sahara. We have therefore spoken out on a number of occasions against the distribution, stockpiling, export and production of anti-personnel landmines. It is high time to tackle this question and to seek solutions to the material and economic effects of this kind of weapon.

In Vienna last May, Protocol II of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects was adopted. This Protocol refers to the use of mines, booby-traps and other devices. It should be seen as a first, important step towards eliminating this class of weapons of mass destruction and of delayed effect. Uruguay will also again co-sponsor the various draft resolutions to be submitted in the course of this session on assistance in mine clearance and on a moratorium on the export of landmines.

In this framework, which has been referred to as micro-disarmament, it is particularly important to address in depth and creatively the problems caused by the proliferation of small and light arms. These are used in an astounding number of actions, ranging from acts of aggression between States to common crimes. These activities are related, *inter alia*, to drug trafficking, internal disruption, organized crime and the actions of mercenary groups. They are encouraged under an arms-control regime that allows the free and easy circulation of weapons used for crimes of this nature through a clandestine and seemingly unstoppable system of transboundary trade. In this respect, Governments should be ready to support the recommendations of the panel of experts that has been working on this issue since June 1996 with the ultimate aim of reducing the traffic in these weapons and curbing their devastating effects.

Lastly, I should like to refer specifically to the most recent session of the Disarmament Commission. In our last statement in the general debate of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, we expressed a certain degree of concern about the slow rate of work in the Commission, since no important results had been forthcoming at recent sessions of that body. We should note that, at its regular session in 1996, the Commission approved a set of guidelines for controlling international arms transfers and eradicating illicit arms trafficking. This achievement gave fresh impetus to the Commission's work. My delegation believes that the topics that will be on the Commission's agenda in the future, in particular those relating to nuclear-weapon-free zones and conventional disarmament or to mine clearance in peacekeeping operations, are of particular importance.

Mrs. Florez Prida (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Speaking on behalf of the delegation of Cuba at

this session of the Committee, I wish to convey to you, Sir, our congratulations on your well-deserved election to serve as Chairman. Our congratulations also go to the other officers of the Bureau.

We would also like to take this opportunity to place on record the Cuban delegation's gratitude to Ambassador Luvsangiin Erdenechuluun of Mongolia for the dedication he brought to the office of Chairman of this Committee at its fiftieth session.

An objective assessment of what has happened in the year since the First Committee last met leads us to the conclusion that, although some positive steps forward have been made, there has been very little progress in meeting the priorities that our countries agreed to establish in the Programme of Action of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We therefore have no reason to relax in our work if we wish some day to realize the objective of general and complete disarmament under strict international control.

Last year, in a number of resolutions, the General Assembly underscored the need to take immediate action in the area that Cuba regards as our highest priority: nuclear disarmament. Unfortunately, this has not proved to be possible; but more disturbing still is the fact that a certain nuclear Power unhesitatingly declared in the general debate that it is simply unrealistic to expect the Conference on Disarmament to address the question of disarmament. Cuba wishes once again to reiterate its firm position in favour of establishing on a priority basis an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament in the Conference on Disarmament. In this respect, the programme of action proposed by a significant number of delegations in Geneva, including Cuba, is a tangible contribution that we hope will be properly taken into account in the negotiating exercise.

The Advisory Opinion rendered by the International Court of Justice on 8 July notes that

> "there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion"

— and my delegation would stress "conclusion" —

> "negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control". (*A/51/4, para. 182 (f)*)

This Opinion is confirmation by the highest multilateral legal organ of the fundamental importance of the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Recently, the so-called Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was adopted. It should be seen as the culmination of the repeated calls for such action from the international community over several decades. However, the Treaty does not live up to expectations and is definitely not the legal instrument that we should have liked to have seen. The delegations that were most actively involved in the negotiating process are perfectly well aware of the intransigent position adopted by certain nuclear Powers. Ultimately, this position made it impossible to set this Treaty in its proper context of disarmament and non-proliferation in all their aspects. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty only prohibits the carrying out of tests through explosions, a technicality that is hardly of concern to the nuclear Powers and certainly does not commit them to ending the qualitative development of such weapons.

At the same time, by forcing the adoption of the Treaty by means of breaching the established procedures of the Conference on Disarmament, a very negative precedent was established with regard to the credibility of the Conference as the single multilateral negotiating body in the area of disarmament.

With regard to other weapons of mass destruction, Cuba has been taking an active part in the negotiating process aimed at strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention through the adoption of a verification protocol. As our delegation to the Ad Hoc Group of governmental experts on this issue has repeatedly stated, we believe that a future protocol should ensure compliance with all the provisions of the Convention, including those relating to exchanges and transfers for peaceful purposes.

The Cuban delegation cannot fail to express its deep concern at the current situation with regard to the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The failure of the two main possessors of such weapons to ratify the Convention at a time when the moment of its entry into force appears imminent opens up the real possibility that this legal instrument may become another Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The Preparatory Commission for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, at The Hague, will have to assess the situation carefully and take the appropriate decisions to address it.

The Disarmament Commission confirmed this year its unquestionable usefulness as a specialized deliberative body for all Member States of our Organization when it successfully concluded consideration of all the items on its agenda. The exchange of views that took place on the holding of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament was extremely useful. Holding such a special session would reaffirm the importance that the entire international community attaches to disarmament and the role that all nations should play in addressing the issue. Cuba firmly supports the beginning of the preparatory process in early 1997 and the convening of the fourth special session in 1999.

Cuba fully shares the humanitarian concerns which arise from the indiscriminate and wanton use of anti-personnel landmines. For this reason our country played an active part in the work of the Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, and believes that its results — particularly the adoption of Additional Protocol II on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-Traps and Other Devices — constitute a step forward whose importance cannot be ignored. Achieving universality for that Convention, which was ratified by Cuba in 1987, should be our priority at this stage.

The use of mines in the context of Cuba's military doctrine is only provided for as a means of defence against an imminent threat or against external aggression, and then only while taking into account the requirements of marking, signalling and recording their deployment, in order to avoid any effect on the civilian population. Our country uses mines in times of peace only as a means of protection for its national borders, as is the case at the perimeter of the naval base at Guantánamo, which is on Cuban territory that is unlawfully occupied by the United States against the wishes of our people.

Our country reaffirms its sincere interest in supporting those international initiatives which can genuinely help to find more effective solutions to the humanitarian problems caused from the irresponsible and indiscriminate use of mines. Those initiatives must, at the same time, guarantee the legitimate national security interests of States which, like Cuba, use such weapons for strictly defensive purposes and in compliance with all existing applicable international provisions. I would like to take this opportunity to express my delegation's readiness to contribute our experience to the implementation of international programmes for the treatment and rehabilitation of mine victims.

One last issue which we would like to raise for the Committee's consideration is our interest in working within the framework of the Non-Aligned Movement with a view to submitting this year, once again, a draft resolution on compliance with environmental standards in the development and implementation of disarmament and arms control agreements. We hope that, given the importance of this issue, the broad support which a similar text received last year will not only be maintained, but will this year receive the support of all delegations.

Mr. Tayeb (Saudi Arabia) (*interpretation from Arabic*): It gives me pleasure at the outset to convey the congratulations of my delegation to you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of this important Committee during the fifty-first session of the General Assembly. I am confident that your expertise and wisdom will help us achieve the desired results for the benefit of the international community, in terms of the achievement of complete disarmament and the establishment of a secure international environment free from nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. I assure you, Sir, of our full cooperation towards achieving the objectives of this Committee, God willing.

This Committee is meeting at a time of intensified international and regional efforts towards achieving nuclear disarmament. There is growing optimism and public awareness with regard to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was extended indefinitely last year, and a few weeks ago the General Assembly adopted the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

With regard to the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty was signed towards the end of 1995, thus making South-East Asia a nuclear-weapon-free zone. In April of this year, the Treaty of Pelindaba was signed to make the continent of Africa yet another nuclear-weapon-free zone. In addition, France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America signed the Protocol to the Treaty of Rarotonga, which declared the South Pacific a nuclear-weapon-free zone. These instruments, together with the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the Antarctic Treaty make the southern hemisphere free of nuclear weapons.

In our region, the Middle East, the United Arab Emirates and Djibouti have acceded to the NPT. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Oman announced at the current session of the General Assembly his country's

decision to accede to the Treaty soon. Thus, all Middle Eastern countries, have become parties to the NPT, with the exception of Israel, which has so far refused to accede.

Moreover, the International Court of Justice issued an advisory opinion on 8 July 1996 on the Legality of the Threat or the Use of Nuclear Weapons. The Court decided unanimously that all States are obligated to pursue in good faith negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. The Court's opinion should remove any doubt about the nature of the commitment of the States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Indeed the Treaty affirms not only affirms the responsibility to continue negotiations in good faith, as some have asserted, but also commits all parties to conclude negotiations leading to complete nuclear disarmament in all its aspects.

These improvements in international disarmament activities should provide an impetus for further international efforts and cooperation to achieve the final objective — an objective pursued by all humankind: to live in a world free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. As the Secretary-General stated last week in his address to the Committee, the race to nuclear disarmament should become as relentless as was the nuclear arms race during the cold war.

Consolidating a climate of international peace and security requires true political will and determination on the part of all States, especially nuclear-weapon States, to disavow dependence on nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction to achieve national security. It also requires restraint in order to achieve progress leading to total nuclear disarmament, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1 (I) of 1946, which deals with all weapons of mass destruction.

The main objective of regional and international treaties governing disarmament, including nuclear disarmament, is to consolidate a climate of peace and security throughout the world. These legal instruments cannot achieve their objectives unless they are universal, multilateral and verifiable. Otherwise, there will be a lack of genuine commitment to abide by those treaties, which will have serious adverse implications for global security. For example, States such as Israel, which are outside nuclear-weapon-free zones, can develop nuclear weapons, thus posing a grave threat to international peace and security.

It is necessary to develop safeguards and verification systems to prevent abuses by any party, as has been the case with Iraq and other States parties to the NPT. Becoming a party to a Treaty is not enough in itself unless there is a detailed safeguards and verification system.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia supports and participates in international and regional efforts aiming at the elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. In this connection, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia signed the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, on 9 August 1996 before the Convention entered into force. Thus, Saudi Arabia has become party to all Treaties related to weapons of mass destruction.

My country also supported the General Assembly resolution on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, because the Treaty represents an important positive step towards nuclear disarmament, although it is not a final objective in itself. We had hoped that the Treaty would be part of a total ban on nuclear weapons and would prohibit nuclear tests in all forms, which would have contributed to all aspects of nuclear disarmament, including non-proliferation. We fear that waiting for 44 States to ratify the Treaty will result in delaying its entry into force, which, God forbid, would represent a setback in international disarmament efforts.

As we see, many regions around the world have succeeded in establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones as a result of cooperation among the States in those regions and their awareness of the need for peaceful coexistence. However, despite international and regional efforts, the Middle East is still unable to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone. This is due to Israel's refusal to cooperate, despite numerous United Nations resolutions that, since 1974, have called for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Among them are General Assembly resolution 50/66, Security Council resolution 487 (1981) and Security Council resolution 687 (1991) whose paragraph 14 states that conforming to section (c) of the resolution represents an important step towards the goal of establishing in the Middle East a zone free from nuclear weapons as well as the means of their delivering.

Despite all those resolutions, no practical steps have been taken to implement them because of Israel's refusal to do so. Although Israel pretends to support the idea of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone, it has not yet taken any practical steps in that direction. Israel refuses to accede

to the NPT and to submit its nuclear facilities to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. Thus, Israel is the only country in the Middle East that possesses nuclear facilities not subject to IAEA safeguards. This state of affairs represents a serious danger to the safety and security of the entire region. Moreover, Israel refuses to respond to the will of the international community by continuously trying to keep the issue outside the United Nations, in the same manner that it keeps the United Nations outside the peace process, even though it was the United Nations that was responsible for establishing the State of Israel, by resolution 181 (II) of 1947.

All such efforts by Israel aim at avoiding the implementation of United Nations resolutions and at the continuation of its military and nuclear programmes outside international supervision. The goal is hegemony and the spread of nuclear terror in the region.

The States of the Middle East had hoped that the peace process that started in Madrid in 1991 would encourage Israel to respond to international and regional concerns regarding nuclear weapons in the Middle East. A Working Group was established within the framework of the multilateral peace negotiations to deal with armaments and security in the region, including nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. However, within that Group, Israel took a negative position on issues related to nuclear weapons. It refused to declare its intention to accede to the NPT and to place its installations under the IAEA safeguards system even after achievement of a peaceful settlement in the Middle East, thus undermining the concept of confidence-building among the States in the region. This negative and intransigent attitude by Israel in the multilateral negotiations has made it impossible for the Group to make any tangible progress.

It is ironic that while Israel's response to the Secretary-General concerning the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East states that the

> "Middle East Multilateral Working Group on Arms Control and Regional Security ... is the most promising forum to pursue the negotiations between the parties." *(A/51/286, p. 5, para. 8).*

It insists, in the course of negotiations within that Group, on refusing to deal with nuclear disarmament in the Middle East.

It is indeed regrettable that, despite the existence of an international consensus and a strong regional desire to make the Middle East a nuclear-weapon-free zone, Israel remains an obstacle to the realization by the peoples of the region of their aspiration to live in peace, free from nuclear terror.

For these reasons, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia requests the international community and the Security Council to take the necessary steps to ensure that Israel accedes to the NPT and that it places all of its nuclear facilities under the international safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). By acceding to the NPT, Israel would help pave the way for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, which would have a great impact on efforts towards the creation of a world free from nuclear weapons.

We are hopeful that the work of the Committee will achieve its objectives through the adoption of resolutions that deal with this important issue and by proposing practical solutions aimed at realizing the dream of the peoples of the Middle East to live in a secure environment free from nuclear terror.

Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia): In the past year the international community has witnessed historic achievements in its disarmament agenda: the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has been opened for signature; the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC), one ratification away from entering into force is to become operational soon; additional restrictions have been placed on the use of certain weapons; and blinding laser weapons have been totally banned.

The conclusion of the Bangkok and Pelindaba Treaties has substantially expanded the area declared to be a nuclear-weapon-free zone. This area includes 114 States and a population of 1.7 billion. Together with Antarctica, it represents more than 50 per cent of the earth's land mass. Moreover, the International Court of Justice has ruled on the question of the illegality of the use of nuclear weapons and on the obligation to eliminate them. All of these achievements have been made possible by the overall warming of the international climate and the determination of States and peoples to make the world a safer and better place to live.

Mongolia welcomes these positive developments in the field of disarmament and the strengthening of global security. However, systematic and bolder efforts are needed on the part of the international community drastically to reduce the arsenals of warfare and further to ensure

security. To this end, the international community should, in our view, define the priorities and programme for further disarmament. As a member of the Group of 21 in the Conference on Disarmament, Mongolia believes that following the extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the conclusion of the CTBT and the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, the international community should address in earnest the question of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The three-phase draft programme of the Group of 21 to eliminate nuclear weapons by the year 2020 and the report of the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons could form the basis for such an approach and for negotiations.

The conclusion of the CTBT is an important step towards preventing the qualitative improvement and proliferation of nuclear weapons and, ultimately, towards furthering the goal of creating a nuclear-weapon-free world. It is to be hoped that, with the forty-fifth nuclear explosion at Lop Nor on 29 July 1996, mankind has witnessed the last of such ominous explosions. This hope is strengthened by the fact that nuclear-weapon States went beyond their unilateral moratoriums on nuclear explosions when they signed the CTBT, since, under international law, a State, by signing an international treaty or convention, assumes an obligation to refrain from any acts that would defeat that treaty or convention's object and purposes. Politically, even one more test, however small, could cause irreparable damage to the prevailing favourable and constructive international atmosphere and compel others to resume, or embark upon, such testing. The CTBT has special significance for Mongolia, since it is one of the countries most affected by nuclear-test explosions, both in the atmosphere and underground. Almost one fourth of the registered tests were conducted in its vicinity, and the environmental, health and geophysical consequences have yet to be assessed.

It is for these reasons that Mongolia, a member of the Conference on Disarmament, took an active part in the CTBT negotiations. Mongolia sincerely hopes that the Lop Nor test will be the last one on Earth.

The CTBT was a compromise, reached as a result of intense negotiations. It is not perfect. It does not ban the further improvement of nuclear weapons through laboratory-scale nuclear tests, nor does it adequately address the question of nuclear disarmament. The Treaty's final provisions make its entry into force quite cumbersome. Despite this and some other flaws, Mongolia, like some 130 countries, has signed the Treaty. It will ratify it in due time and will take an active part in the work of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization.

It is to be hoped that the vague declarations made on signing the Treaty to the effect that the existence in the world of huge nuclear arsenals and the adherence of others to nuclear deterrence policies demand that the supreme national interests be taken into account to ensure the safety, reliability and effectiveness of nuclear weapons, are not meant to alter the Treaty obligations.

The credibility of the CTBT, like that of other international Treaties in the field of disarmament, will depend on the effectiveness of its verification regime. We therefore believe that the verification system under the CTBT should be efficient and cost-effective and should ensure equal access by all States parties. Mongolia, which is determined to contribute to the implementation of the CTBT, will actively participate in the International Monitoring System for the detection of nuclear explosions. It has therefore offered to have a number of seismic, radionuclide and infrasound stations on its territory. As a result, Mongolia's commitment to the International Monitoring System will be broader than that of many other States parties. This fact, as well as the country's economic and financial situation, compel it to share with others the financial and other costs that will eventually be connected with operating those stations. In this connection, Mongolia is pleased to note Japan's offer to expand cooperation with developing countries on seismic technologies.

When Belarus removes the last of its strategic nuclear missiles this year, Belarus, Kazakstan and Ukraine will together have removed 3,400 nuclear weapons from their territories, dismantled their nuclear infrastructures and thereby become non-nuclear-weapon States, both *de jure* and de facto. Like others, Mongolia commends these States for the concrete steps they have taken in accordance with their international obligations.

It is also gratifying to note that four of the nuclear Powers are reducing or contemplating reducing their arsenals. Russia and the United States are reducing their strategic arsenals under the START I Treaty, well ahead of the scheduled date of December 1999. It is expected that within two years the United Kingdom will have reduced its nuclear arsenal to one nuclear-weapon system, while France has declared its intention to abolish its land-based nuclear missiles altogether. However, the existence of stockpiles of nuclear weapons that are equivalent to 750,000 of the

nuclear weapons used on Hiroshima shows that we are still a long way from making the world a safer place.

We hope that once the Russian Federation ratifies START II, and both Russia and the United States thereby proceed to cut their strategic nuclear weapons to 3,000 and 3,500, respectively, negotiations on START III — preferably involving all the other nuclear-weapon States — will get under way.

The closing down and dismantling of nuclear-weapon-system infrastructures should, in our view, be another concrete step towards nuclear disarmament. The closing down and dismantling of the Semipalatinsk testing facility and of infrastructures in Ukraine and Belarus should now be followed by similar steps by the nuclear-weapon States. We welcome the French Government's commitment to close down its testing site on the Mururoa atoll in the Pacific. Like other countries of the region, Mongolia would particularly welcome the closure and eventual dismantling of the existing testing facility in our region. Its dismantling would underline the commitment to nuclear disarmament. Likewise, specialized scientific research laboratories and other nuclear-weapon-related infrastructures within the nuclear-weapon States should either be closed down or converted so as to put an end to the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons.

The successful conclusion of the CTBT raises the question of what to do next. Mongolia, like the overwhelming majority of States, believes that the international community should vigorously pursue nuclear disarmament. It is not only a political imperative but the legal obligation of States, as reflected in the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, issued on 8 July 1996. The Court unanimously recognized that

> "There exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control." (*A/51/4, p. 39*)

Moreover, as the report of the Canberra Commission convincingly demonstrates, the doctrine of nuclear deterrence is redundant and dangerous, and diminishes the security of all States, including that of the nuclear-weapon States themselves.

We believe that the establishment of more nuclear-weapon-free zones in different regions of the world on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the States of the regions concerned constitutes an important disarmament measure and thereby enhances regional and global peace and security. Mongolia therefore warmly welcomes the conclusion of the Treaties of Bangkok and Pelindaba, which establish nuclear-weapon-free zones in vast new areas, and the signing by France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America of the Protocols to the Rarotonga Treaty. The nuclear-weapon-free zones established by the two Treaties to which I referred demonstrate the will of the peoples of those areas to be free from nuclear threat, and gives a powerful impetus to the process of disarmament.

In 1992 Mongolia declared its territory to be a nuclear-weapon-free zone. This step was taken when former Soviet troops withdrew from our country in the wake of the end of the cold war and the normalization of Russian-Chinese and Mongolian-Chinese relations. Our policy can be better understood if we bear in mind that in the 1960s and 1970s, at the height of Sino-Soviet tension, there was a risk that Mongolia would, accidentally or otherwise, be turned into a battleground, not excluding the possibility of the use of nuclear weapons. The withdrawal of the troops of one nuclear Power from Mongolia rendered meaningless its being targeted by other nuclear Powers, as had been the case in the 1960s and 1970s.

Mongolia's initiative was welcomed by both nuclear and non-nuclear States alike. The former reiterated their negative and positive security assurances with respect to Mongolia. The initiative enjoys the full support of the Non-Aligned Movement as a whole. Although its nature is unique, our initiative is an expression of a policy designed by a State to protect itself from being drawn into the nuclear calculations or plans of others by precluding the deployment of nuclear weapons or parts thereof on its territory, thereby contributing to nuclear security and confidence-building. It is a subregional measure that is in line with the national interests of Mongolia itself, as well as with the interests of its two neighbours, both of which happen to be nuclear Powers.

As a country situated at the heart of the Asian continent, Mongolia believes that the Central Asian region, with its almost limitless opportunities, and, yet, enormous challenges, could be turned into a nuclear-weapon-free zone. The vulnerable, landlocked countries of the Central Asian region have vast territories, rapidly growing populations and rich natural resources. Most of the countries of the region are in transition. They are in the process of State-building, identifying their national interests and priorities and restructuring their economies. Mindful of the situation in some southern parts of Asia, and of the growing outside interest in their untapped energy and mineral resources, as

well as their non-utilized human resources, it is needless to say that the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in this subregion would have a positive impact on maintaining and strengthening the overall balance and stability in the subregion and its strategically important adjacent areas.

Like Mongolia, most of the countries of this subregion have, on a number of occasions, expressed their interest in declaring the Central Asian region a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Mongolia therefore believes that the General Assembly could consider the question of turning this vast Asian heartland into a nuclear-weapon-free zone, especially since both nuclear-weapon States in the region have consistently supported the initiatives of non-nuclear-weapon States to establish such zones. Indeed, on 12 April 1996, the President of the Security Council, speaking on behalf of members of the Council, encouraged the establishment of such zones when referring to the signing of the Treaty of Pelindaba.

By signing the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the non-nuclear-weapon States have forsworn the acquisition of such weapons, and we therefore expect the nuclear-weapon States to commit themselves not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against them. To date only China has made a unilateral commitment, which it reiterated in April 1995, that at no time and under no circumstances would it be first to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or the countries in nuclear-weapon-free zones. Mongolia commends Security Council resolution 984 (1995) on unilateral security assurances by the nuclear-weapon States to non-nuclear-weapon States as an important step towards the speedy conclusion of a substantive international treaty.

Mongolia believes that the question of banning the production of fissile materials for use in nuclear weapons should be promptly addressed by the international community. The Conference on Disarmament should, in our view, redouble its efforts to have the cut-off treaty ready for signature in the near future, especially since that is one of the understandings arrived at during the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Before leaving the nuclear issue, I should like briefly to touch upon nuclear-waste issues. The question of nuclear-waste disposal is acquiring increasing importance as a result of both the international prohibition on dumping radioactive waste in the oceans, imposed by the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter, and the rapid increase in the quantity of nuclear waste. The increasing use of nuclear power stations in the world and the practical measures of nuclear disarmament require that States tackle these issues urgently bearing in mind, *inter alia*, the interests of neighbouring States and of the international community as a whole.

Until radioactive waste is safely disposed of, States will always be exposed to this silent, invisible threat, since the radiation produced by the decay of radioactive materials, as defined in the draft convention on the prohibition of radiological weapons, could bring about death, suffering, environmental disaster and destruction. It is for this reason that the General Assembly, in its resolutions on the prohibition of the dumping of radioactive waste, has referred specifically to the potential hazards underlying any disposal of nuclear waste that could, by implication, have the same effects as a radiological weapon. In this context, Mongolia welcomes the decision of the Moscow Summit on Nuclear Safety and Security to support and expedite the conclusion of the convention on the safety of radioactive waste management.

I should now like to turn to some non-nuclear issues. It is gratifying to note that the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction is soon to become operational, as 64 countries, including Mongolia, have already ratified it. Ratification of the Convention by all the signatory States, and especially by the two States with the largest arsenals of chemical weapons, would constitute an important step towards eliminating an entire class of weapons of mass destruction. Despite the progress registered since the third Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, we feel that there is a need to further reinforce the Convention by providing it with some teeth in the form of a legally binding and effective verification regime. In this respect all the necessary political support should be given to the Ad Hoc Working Group.

Disarmament in the field of weapons of mass destruction should go hand in hand with conventional disarmament. Efforts should be made to ensure transparency with regard to armaments, so as to enhance control over illicit arms trafficking and further prohibit and restrict weapons which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects. In this connection, the preoccupation of the international community with landmines is truly justified. There are almost 110 million

active landmines, and each year they kill or maim some 20,000 people, especially civilians. Mongolia fully shares the growing concern of the international community. It is considering acceding to amended Protocol II to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious of to Have Indiscriminate Effects. In doing so Mongolia would bear in mind, on the one hand, international efforts to ban certain categories of landmines for humanitarian reasons and, on the other, its national security interests. The length of Mongolia's land border, as well as the size of its population, make it imperative that landmines are used to ensure the inviolability of its frontiers — an important element of State sovereignty and national security — until a viable and more effective alternative to them is conceived and introduced.

Regional approaches to confidence-building and disarmament are of paramount importance in ensuring international peace and security. That is why Mongolia fully supported the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum — the newly emerging intergovernmental multilateral security dialogue arrangement in the Asia-Pacific region, which can play an important role in regional confidence-building, arms control and, perhaps, the settlement of regional political and military issues. Mongolia is interested in, and working towards, joining the forum soon. It strongly supports the joint efforts of Asian States to constitute a regional conventional arms register, which should be more specific and detailed than the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, as well as the publication of defence White Papers by the States of the region.

Mongolia welcomes the signing of the Shanghai agreement between China, Russia, Kazakstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikstan on strengthening confidence in the military field in border areas as a major event that is of paramount importance for increasing confidence in our Asian heartland. Turning to United Nations-related regional activity, my delegation would like to commend the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific for its work in organizing regional conferences and seminars on various disarmament- and security-related issues. Mongolia, like others, will continue to support the Kathmandu process.

In conclusion, I should like specifically to underline the very useful and valuable role played by non-governmental organizations in our common search for the optimal ways and means of achieving the noble goals of arms control and disarmament under conditions of greater security. I should also like to express my personal appreciation to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute for its tireless and dedicated work, for the indispensable yearbooks and for the research reports on specific pressing disarmament and international security issues.

Mr. Jayanama (Thailand): Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the delegation of Thailand, I should like to congratulate you on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. Your distinguished career and vast experience are well known to all of us and I am confident that under your able guidance, the deliberations of this important Committee will be brought to a successful conclusion. Our congratulations also go to the other members of the Bureau of the Committee.

As far as international peace and security are concerned, this session of the General Assembly began on a high note with the opening of the signing of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which was adopted at the previous session in September. My delegation is pleased that, after 50 years of waiting, nuclear-test explosions are finally outlawed. Now we can say that there is an additional international mechanism to help constrain the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and to help impede the senseless race towards nuclear superiority, particularly at the regional level, thus making the world a safer place. My delegation is convinced that, in spite of its many deficiencies, the Treaty represents a step forward towards a higher goal of general and complete disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament. Thailand will therefore join others in signing and ratifying the Treaty.

As I have mentioned, through its adoption of the CTBT, the General Assembly has put in place one additional mechanism for nuclear disarmament and the elimination of all nuclear weapons. Our future task is to put in place more of these mechanisms and to ensure their complementarity and relevance. In this connection, my delegation believes that the CTBT is an invaluable complement to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and its safeguards and we hope that the relationship between the two regimes will be further developed and strengthened.

On the NPT, in particular, Thailand believes that further efforts should be made by States Parties to fulfil their obligations under articles IV and VI of the Treaty and, to this end, we look forward to actively participating in the process leading to the NPT review conference in the year 2000, beginning with the first Preparatory Committee

meeting next year. In the meantime, we wish to register our full support for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)'s Programme "93+2" which, once approved in its entirety by the IAEA Board of Governors, will considerably enhance the Agency's capability in performing its task in nuclear inspections and, thus, strengthening the NPT regime.

Now that we have the CTBT and the NPT where we want them, the next logical step would be to further intensify our efforts towards nuclear disarmament by commencing multilateral negotiations on a treaty to ban the production of fissile materials for use in nuclear weapons, the so-called fissile material cut-off treaty. Such negotiations could take place simultaneously with the negotiations on a phased programme of nuclear disarmament leading to the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework. Negotiations on these two issues should be carried out by the Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament. The negotiations on a phased programme on nuclear disarmament, in particular, would be in line with General Assembly resolution 50/70 P, which calls for the establishment of an ad hoc committee in the Conference on Disarmament for this purpose. And while we await the commencement of such negotiations, my delegation would like to register Thailand's support for the Programme of Action for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons submitted by 28 members of the Group of 21 in Geneva earlier this year. We believe that the proposal represents a realistic approach which could serve as a useful guideline for future negotiations on nuclear disarmament.

While it is the duty of Governments to negotiate nuclear disarmament and the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons, it should be the prerogative of the international community and civil society to forge a global consensus against these and other abhorrent weapons of mass destruction. It is with this belief that Thailand welcomes the historic Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons. While the Court's decision fails categorically to spell out the illegality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons in all circumstances, it does, in effect, provide a firm foundation for world public opinion towards nuclear weapons.

So far, the opinion against nuclear armament has been loud and clear, particularly from those peoples whose States do not possess or aspire to possess nuclear weapons. This public outcry has been made evident and concrete through the creation of various nuclear-weapon-free zones in regions around the world. Instead of existing in isolation, these nuclear-weapon-free zones now attempt to cooperate with one another and learn from each other's experiences. It is believed that this exercise will help create a network of cooperation which would eventually help weave regions together in a nuclear-weapon-free world. As the host for the signing of the Bangkok Treaty, establishing the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone earlier this year, Thailand is particularly proud of its contribution to this achievement and is resolved to cooperate closely with all fellow States parties to nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties around the world.

Thailand believes that this effort to form and generate world public opinion against nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction should continue to be pursued at a vigorous pace. This is the reason why my delegation also fully supports the United Nations's efforts and those of other international institutions and non-governmental organizations in promoting public awareness of the need for disarmament. In particular, Thailand appreciates the work of regional centres, such as the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, which tailor their programmes and projects in response to the particular needs and interests of the region. Through the years, Thailand has found the so-called Kathmandu process initiated by the Asia-Pacific Centre useful and intends to continue to be an active participant in that process. And, since the Centre exists parallel to other regional institutions with similar purposes, such as the Association of South-East Asian Nations Regional Forum and the security dialogues in East Asia, it could only help enhance cooperation and confidence-building in that region.

While the world focuses on nuclear disarmament, it should not lose sight of other weapons of mass destruction and certain conventional weapons which may cause excessive injury or have indiscriminate effects. As with nuclear weapons, there is a need for a harmonious and comprehensive global approach in dealing with these weapons. As a signatory to the Chemical Weapons Convention, Thailand is now accelerating its legislative procedure in order to be able to ratify the Treaty at the earliest possible date. In this connection, it is regrettable that, although the Treaty is now about to enter into force, two major countries that presumably possess the largest and the most sophisticated arsenals of chemical weapons have yet to ratify it.

As for the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction,

Thailand is following closely the work of the Ad Hoc Group of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention. We welcome the Group's emphasis on promoting international cooperation, particularly in the area of verification, and believe that future mechanisms for this purpose, which are to be negotiated, should be universal and non-discriminatory.

As far as the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) is concerned, Thailand is pleased that this year's Review Conference on the Convention managed to make notable progress, especially with regard to the new Protocol on Blinding Laser Weapons (Protocol IV). Thailand is also pleased that there is agreement on an amended Protocol II on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the use of Mines, Booby Traps and Other Devices. As a landmine-affected country that does not manufacture or export landmines, Thailand will continue to work with the international community to realize the goals of this Convention. In this connection, my delegation also wishes to reiterate its support for United Nations efforts in this area, particularly the United Nations initiative in drawing up a comprehensive mine clearance programme, launching mine awareness activities and, more importantly, establishing the Voluntary Fund for Assistance in Mine Clearance.

The sole purpose of all weaponry is to inflict injury or take lives. Small arms can turn into weapons that can cause excessive injuries and have indiscriminate effects if they arrive in truckloads and are delivered into the hands of war fanatics. It is with this notion that Thailand welcomes all efforts to regulate the international or cross-border flow of weapons. In particular, my delegation is gratified that this year's session of the Disarmament Commission was able to adopt the guidelines on international transfer of illicit arms. Despite their lack of legal force, the guidelines are nevertheless an important step towards eliminating illegal armaments, especially small arms, which are too prevalent in all conflict areas of the world.

In this connection, my delegation also wishes to take this opportunity to reiterate its continued support for the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. Into its fifth year of existence, the Register has proven, beyond any doubt, to be a useful tool in creating transparency in arms and, thus, confidence-building among States, at both the international and regional levels.

In his statement before the General Assembly this year, Mr. Amnuay Viravan, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Thailand, called on all Member States to make the total elimination of all nuclear weapons and their delivery systems, as well as of other weapons of mass destruction, a top priority for the twenty-first century. I am here to repeat that call and to propose further that equal attention should also be given to efforts to regulate and control conventional weapons.

My delegation stands ready to cooperate with all like-minded countries in working towards this end, to work together to realize the goals of general and complete disarmament. In particular, we look forward to participating actively in the fourth special session of the General Assembly on disarmament, as well as in its preparatory work that will begin early next year. Through this special session, set to take place at the dawn of a new century, we will be able to plan and visualize a safer and more peaceful future for us and for our children.

Mr. Guillén (Peru)(*interpretation from Spanish*): Allow me to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. Our congratulations also go to the other officers of the Committee.

I would like to comply with the proposal of the President of the Assembly to reduce or eliminate the general debate in the main committees of the General Assembly, limiting it to statements providing information on specific actions that Member States intend to implement.

First, we were among the first signatories of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), having been active in this area since 1963. We support it resolutely. We believe that it constitutes an initial step that should not replace a nuclear disarmament programme. We draw attention to the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice, which unanimously decided that there exists an obligation for all States to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. We shall maintain the reservation expressed in the Geneva negotiations to the effect that those countries that do not possess nuclear weapons cannot be expected to bear the costs of the technical secretariat. Neither, of course, once the Treaty enters into force, can they be required to defray the costs of verification of the ban.

Secondly, we shall continue to support concerted action among the countries signatories to the treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones in Latin America, Africa and Asia, with a view to inviting countries committed to that objective to accede to them, thereby extending them to new areas.

Thirdly, we shall be taking part in the consultations intended to commit States to the preparation of a convention that would totally ban the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of anti-personnel mines, which have claimed hundreds of thousands of civilian lives among adults and children. We believe that an expression of resolve in this respect, which might possibly take the form of a resolution, should not simply reflect a good intention expressed by the United Nations. If it is not possible to set a specific date for this, it is essential and, I would say, healthy for everyone for the Organization to review the progress being made on this point. An example of regional progress in this area is the resolution recently adopted by the Organization of American States, which urges the establishment of a zone free of anti-personnel landmines on the American continent.

Fourthly, we believe that in order to strengthen regional activities on disarmament, it is vital to approach it in accordance with the specific circumstances and characteristics of each region: that is, the different levels of progress achieved in the area of disarmament, ranging from confidence- and security-building measures to the conclusion of specific arms limitation or disarmament agreements.

In this regard, it is regrettable that after progressively stifling the Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean based in Lima, and after being criticized for that, the Secretariat has had to suspend its activities. This is happening at a time when there is a great desire at the United Nations, or so we hear, to disseminate and publicize what the Secretariat and the United Nations are accomplishing in this and indeed all other areas. We do not share the idea that disarmament in Latin America and the Caribbean can be dealt with from an office located in New York. We believe that it would be more candid to say that it will not be dealt with at all, or that it is not of interest.

Fifthly, and lastly, Peru takes the view that any approach or action aimed at disarmament is closely linked to the process of the economic and social development of each nation; in other words, all the resources that are freed should be devoted to the urgent needs of development.

Mr. Albesbas (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)(*interpretation from Arabic*): On behalf of my country's delegation, it gives me pleasure to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the post of Chairman of the First Committee. I should like also to assure you of our full support and cooperation in fulfilling the duties and functions entrusted to this Committee.

In the last few years we have witnessed successive and important developments and events in the field of disarmament. Despite their historic importance, these developments have some negative aspects. In the context of my country's comprehensive view of the question of disarmament, I should like to explain our views on these issues, including questions to be considered by the First Committee at this session.

First, the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons of 8 July 1996 confirmed that nothing in customary or conventional international law justifies the threat or use of these weapons. The advisory opinion of the Court refers to the fact that the threat or use of nuclear weapons runs counter to the requirements of the international law applicable in armed conflict, particularly those of the principles and rules of humanitarian law. The Court's advisory opinion also states that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. We believe that this opinion, issued by the highest international judiciary organ, constitutes a legal basis on which the First Committee and the General Assembly can build in working steadily towards the acceleration of the nuclear disarmament process.

In this respect, we would like to recall the proposed programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons submitted by the Group of 21 at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva (CD/1419). First, we are confident that this programme would contribute effectively to the attainment of one of the most important objectives of our Committee: the phased and total elimination of nuclear weapons. Implementation of the programme will depend on a serious commitment to the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament, without discrimination among States.

Secondly, my country has always hastened to support all measures to free the world from the nuclear threat. In addition to having been a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) for over 20 years, we signed in April 1996 the Treaty of Pelindaba on the denuclearization of Africa, demonstrating our genuine will to free the world from nuclear terror. Regrettably, despite our prior support for the formulation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), we did not find in the text of the current Treaty any convincing proof of its comprehensive nature. This has greatly disappointed us because although the Treaty bans explosive tests, it turns a blind eye to other technical methods for the qualitative

development of nuclear weapons, such as laboratory and similar tests. Our understanding of any treaty that bans nuclear tests in a comprehensive manner is that it must cover all tests aimed at developing nuclear weapons, vertically and horizontally. For these reasons, my country has not yet signed the Treaty. However, we are ready to review our position should conditions emerge that give this Treaty greater credibility and confirm the effective discontinuance of all types of nuclear-weapon tests.

Here, I should like to recall the statement made by Mr. Omar Muntasser, Secretary of the General People's Committee for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, in the general debate of the General Assembly on 1 October 1996:

> "The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty recently approved by the General Assembly falls short of the aspirations of the peoples of the world to a total ban on all nuclear tests. As formulated, the Treaty merely perpetuates the status quo. It could even pre-empt efforts aimed at achieving a world totally free from nuclear terror." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Plenary Meetings, 17th meeting.)*

Thirdly, the decision of the Conference on Disarmament to accept the membership of 23 new countries is a praiseworthy decision. We hope that this trend will continue in order that all countries wishing to participate in the work of this negotiating forum can obtain membership without restrictions. We look forward to a larger role for the Conference on Disarmament in nuclear disarmament initiatives. We also urge the Conference on Disarmament to take the necessary measures to begin negotiations immediately, with a view to concluding a cut-off convention on the production of fissionable materials that can be used in producing nuclear weapons.

We would like to recall that at its fiftieth session the General Assembly adopted resolution 50/70 P, which calls on the Conference on Disarmament to commence negotiations early in 1996 on a phased programme of nuclear disarmament, with a view to the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons within a specific time-bound framework to be agreed upon. We appreciate the burden shouldered by the Conference on Disarmament as the only negotiating forum on disarmament questions. However, we urge it to continue its efforts and benefit from the present international climate, which we consider favourable to serious action.

Fourthly, the meetings of the Preparatory Committee for the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), to be held in the year 2000, take on great importance in the light of the decision of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We hope that these meetings will be held in an atmosphere of understanding and common endeavour, so that we may be able to properly prepare for the next conference and implement the resolutions and recommendations of the 1995 Conference, including considering what measures need to be taken to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of these weapons. In this respect, we would like to second what was said by some States in their interventions: It is high time that the Conference on Disarmament initiate, through an expert committee, a study of this question, with a view to reaching an instrument or an international agreement that requires nuclear States to give guarantees to non-nuclear States.

Fifthly, and in conclusion, I should like to refer to a positive phenomenon in the field of nuclear-weapon disarmament: the increase in the number of agreements establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones. My country recently signed the Treaty of Pelindaba, which made Africa a nuclear-weapon-free zone. These achievements are gratifying to us all. Regrettably, the Middle East still suffers from the spectre of nuclear terror. As members of the Committee are aware, Israel is the only nuclear Power in the region. It alone refuses to accede to the NPT or place its nuclear facilities under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency. It is the only impediment to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. In this regard, I should like to draw the attention of members to General Assembly resolution 50/73, which calls on Israel to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and to the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the NPT.

We hope that members of this Committee will give this question the attention it merits, and we urge the Government of Israel to accede to the NPT and to agree on a timetable for the dismantling and destruction of Israeli nuclear stock, under United Nations supervision.

Mr. Kittikhoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic): On behalf of the delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, I wish to congratulate you warmly, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee at the fifty-first session of the General Assembly. Aware of your rich

diplomatic experience and skill, I am confident that under your guidance, our work will be successfully concluded.

I would also like to avail myself of this opportunity to convey, through you, my deep appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Luvsangiin Erdenechuluun, the former Permanent Representative of Mongolia, for his able stewardship of the Committee last year.

The recent adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty by the fiftieth session of the General Assembly was an important event in United Nations history in the field of disarmament. Quite naturally, like many other developing countries, we regret that the Treaty did not include a specific fixed time-frame for the total elimination of all nuclear weapons at the global level. We nevertheless decided to join the world community in adopting the Treaty because we regarded its adoption as an important step towards a gradual achievement of nuclear disarmament. Despite its imperfections, the Treaty, in our opinion, if rigorously implemented, would help prevent the nuclear-weapon States from upgrading their nuclear arsenals and the non-nuclear-weapon States from acquiring them. This is how, we believe, nuclear disarmament can be gradually achieved.

Nowadays, international peace and security seem to be assured and strengthened as nuclear-weapon-free zones are established by the regional States concerned. The Treaty of Bangkok, signed on 15 December 1995, declaring South-East Asia a nuclear-weapon-free zone, the Treaty of Pelindaba, signed on 11 April 1996, creating a nuclear-free-zone in Africa, and the Treaties of Tlatelolco and Rarotonga establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones in Latin America and the Caribbean and in the South Pacific, respectively, are cases in point.

The establishment of such nuclear-weapon-free zones demonstrates the genuine aspiration of the peoples of the regions concerned to be free from nuclear threat or annihilation. This positive trend deserves our full encouragement and support.

The Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons is an important body and one that could draw the attention of the international community to the nuclear issue. We look forward in the years ahead to studying its recommendations aimed at the achievement of its ultimate goal: the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

The delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic regards the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice concerning the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons as an important contribution to the world community's efforts to maintain international peace and security. By its unanimous pronouncement that there is an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control, the Court gave a strong signal that it is about time that we all do what we can to rid our planet of nuclear weapons and thereby save all humankind from nuclear holocaust.

While we examine the issue of peace and disarmament, it is necessary to recognize the roles played by the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament. They are playing a valuable role in efforts to promote regional arms control as well as to build confidence and trust among countries in the respective regions. In this respect, my delegation fully supports the initiatives, programmes and activities for peace and disarmament being conducted by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, with its headquarters in Kathmandu, Nepal.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic supports the efforts made by the world community to minimize the use of inhumane and injurious weapons, including anti-personnel landmines. As a victim of the unexploded ordnance left over from a 30-year war of independence, our country is fully aware of the grave and disastrous consequences those destructive weapons can cause. In an effort to cope with this problem, the Lao Government, together with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), established on 1 August 1995 a trust fund for the clearance of unexploded ordnance. A national programme on the subject has been initiated and is now being implemented, with the objective of reducing the number of civilian casualties and increasing the amount of land available for food production as well as for other development activities.

Since the establishment of the fund, contributions and pledges have been received, in cash and in kind, from friendly Governments and international organizations, among them Australia, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, UNDP and UNICEF. On behalf of the Lao Government and people, I would like to take this opportunity to express our thanks and sincere gratitude to them. It is our hope that other countries, international organizations and non-governmental organizations will also contribute financially to this fund.

Since our country now enjoys peace and political stability, the land, once cleared, will remain cleared. Our national clearance programme seems ambitious, but with the support and cooperation of the world community, it is our belief that it can be set in motion and translated into reality.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Mr. Chairman, please accept the felicitations of the Pakistan delegation on your well-deserved election to preside over the First Committee. We are confident that under your able leadership the Committee will adopt far-reaching decisions on a global agenda for disarmament. May I also express our appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Erdenchuluun of Mongolia, for the effective manner in which he conducted the Committee's work last year.

The end of the cold war opened up new and exciting opportunities to realize the United Nations Charter's vision of international peace and collective security based on the just solution of conflicts and disputes, non-use of force, and control of armaments at the lowest possible levels. In the past few years, we have witnessed a number of important achievements in the quest for disarmament: the START II Treaty was concluded, and nuclear weapons are being actually dismantled and destroyed; the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction was concluded and may soon come into force; the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was indefinitely extended; new Protocols severely restricting anti-personnel landmines were adopted by consensus; nuclear-weapon-free zones now cover the whole of the southern hemisphere; and after 40 years the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has been adopted. Despite its shortcomings, Pakistan supported the CTBT because it can halt nuclear escalation in our region and prevent the nuclear Powers from developing new kinds of nuclear weapons.

However, our justifiable sense of accomplishment must be tempered by a sober acknowledgement of the limited nature of the progress made and the larger dangers that loom over the entire disarmament horizon.

Over 30,000 nuclear weapons remain in operational readiness. START II may not be ratified by one of the two parties. Even if it is, over 6,000 nuclear weapons will be retained by the two Powers, discouraging reductions by other nuclear-weapon States and eroding the moral argument for global non-proliferation.

Contrary to the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, plans and proposals have been put forward for theatre missile defences, which could escalate rather than arrest the proliferation of nuclear deployments by those Powers that do not possess such anti-missile defences.

The indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was construed by some as legitimizing their possession of nuclear weapons indefinitely. The Conference's Principles and Objectives identified only two specific objectives — the CTBT and a cut-off treaty — both of which are perceived by their sponsors as non-proliferation rather than nuclear disarmament measures.

Some nuclear Powers have declared that nuclear weapons are to be retained against uncertain threats emanating from unspecified adversaries, including non-nuclear-weapon States.

There is a robust refusal by some to contemplate multilateral negotiations for nuclear disarmament.

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) is likely to come into force without the two declared chemical-weapon Powers.

The CTBT will not prevent the nuclear Powers from maintaining their nuclear weapons in operational readiness through non-explosive tests. In any event, the CTBT will not come into force so long as one nuclear-capable State maintains the position that it will not sign the Treaty — "not now, not later".

Unless the approach to global disarmament changes, what was described by the European Union representative as a "network of disarmament agreements" is likely to become a tangled web of inequity, offering total security to the powerful and advanced States and consigning the small and the weak to total insecurity. The architecture of disarmament that we are constructing in this exciting new era will be flawed and fragile so long as it is based on imposition and inequality. Such a disarmament structure will be challenged and will eventually collapse.

The world is not composed of the knights of right and the dark forces of destabilization. It consists of large and small, but sovereign, States, each with its own security and developmental concerns, which should not be trampled upon by misguided crusaders.

Some of the so-called export-control regimes are an example of this tendency. For example, the NPT's provisions nowhere sanctioned a suppliers' cartel, whose conditions are applied unequally, almost at whim, against some and not against others. Similarly, the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) arbitrarily determines the conditions for restraints on the transfer of unilaterally determined categories of missiles and components to some States and not to others. It does not address threats arising from indigenously produced missiles, thus discriminating against the less advanced and weaker States. It is disturbing that such regimes are now sought to be created on a wider scale.

Pakistan is aware of the need for restraint and responsibility in the production and trade of all armaments, conventional and non-conventional. We are prepared to work for internationally negotiated regimes in sensitive areas. But we cannot subscribe to arbitrary regimes, and we reject in particular the punitive approach espoused by some, often at the cost of their own objectives of promoting global or regional security and non-proliferation.

Fifty years ago, the General Assembly in its first resolution called for the elimination from

> "national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction". (*resolution 1 (I)*)

This call is even more compelling today. The post-cold-war period has created a historic window of opportunity to realize the goal of ridding the world of nuclear weapons. Nuclear Powers are no longer locked in a strategic contest. They do not need nuclear weapons against each other and they certainly do not need them against non-nuclear States. If this opportunity to realize nuclear disarmament is not seized, it may not return. Great Power rivalries may revive. A multipolar nuclear world could multiply the dangers of deliberate or accidental use of nuclear weapons.

The priority for negotiations on nuclear disarmament was affirmed by the international community at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The milestone advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice upheld the view that the nuclear Powers have an obligation to conduct and conclude such negotiations. This is the view of the overwhelming majority of Member States, having been proclaimed by the Cartagena Summit of the leaders of the Non-Aligned Movement and reiterated by Ministers of the Non-Aligned Movement in New York last month. The NPT Review and Extension Conference and the Canberra Commission have also confirmed the priority for nuclear disarmament.

Pakistan, together with the members of the Group of 21, has pressed for the creation of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament in the Conference on Disarmament, as called for in resolution 50/70 P of the previous session of the General Assembly. We have joined 27 other members of the Group in the Conference on Disarmament in proposing a draft programme for the phased elimination of nuclear weapons, as circulated in document CD/1419 of 7 August 1996. We believe that this proposal can serve as a basis for negotiations in the ad hoc committee of the Conference on Disarmament.

We welcome the European Union's commitment to further systematic and progressive efforts towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and note the importance the European Union attaches to "global nuclear arms reductions". We welcome the readiness of the Russian Federation to open nuclear disarmament talks in the Conference on Disarmament. We welcome in particular China's proposal to conclude a convention prohibiting nuclear weapons.

It should be clarified that the negotiations which the non-aligned and neutral States are seeking would be designed to elaborate a programme for nuclear disarmament, and to identify the measures that constitute the programme, their *inter se* priorities and the phases and time-frames within which they would be achieved. Each disarmament measure included in the programme would be negotiated through a mechanism — bilateral, regional, multilateral or global — that is the most appropriate for that specific measure. The nature of the specific disarmament measure will itself indicate the countries whose participation will be relevant in negotiating it. But we do not agree that nuclear disarmament should be negotiated solely by the nuclear Powers. This contravenes the consensus of the first special session on disarmament (SSOD I) that:

> "All States have the right to participate in disarmament negotiations." (*resolution S-10/2, para. 28*)

The Conference on Disarmament remains — despite the CTBT episode — the single multilateral forum for disarmament negotiations. It is not a forum for negotiations on non-proliferation agreements alone. Nuclear disarmament is a central point on the Conference on Disarmament's long-standing agenda. The Conference on Disarmament cannot be dismissed as "an inappropriate forum for an unamenable

subject". The "single hijack" should not create ambitions for a "double hijack".

Pakistan therefore hopes that the Conference on Disarmament will be able to establish ad hoc committees to conduct negotiations on all the items on its agenda. The importance we attach to negative security assurances is well known. Until nuclear disarmament is achieved, nuclear-weapon States have an obligation to assure non-nuclear States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We are most concerned that doctrines envisaging the use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear States have not been abandoned by most of the nuclear Powers. The logical corollary of the restriction of the security assurances to only the States parties to the NPT or other non-proliferation arrangements is that the use or threat of use against non-nuclear States that are not parties to non-proliferation arrangements can be contemplated. Whether explicit or implicit, this threat is contrary to the Charter's proscription of the use or threat of use of force and would give the threatened State the right, under Article 51, to take the necessary measures for its self-defence.

Pakistan is also prepared to commence the work of an ad hoc committee on the fissile materials convention in the Conference on Disarmament. We welcomed the adoption of the Shannon Report, which reflected the understanding that the scope of the proposed treaty would be further considered in the ad hoc committee. We would like explicitly to ensure that our concerns regarding unequal stockpiles will be addressed in negotiating the treaty, or else this Treaty also will be another measure for non-proliferation alone. It would not contribute at all to nuclear disarmament, as envisaged in paragraph 50 (b) of the Final Document of SSOD I.

There are difficult issues involved in the Ad Hoc Group of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, especially regarding on-site measures, which are not amenable to solutions by a certain date. We agree with the view that compliance with this Convention should also cover the undertakings relating to peaceful cooperation and technology exchanges. We believe that wide adherence to a possible new protocol can be ensured only if there is genuine consensus on sensitive issues. We have supported the intensification of the work of the Ad Hoc Group, which should not, however, overlap with or limit the scheduled sessions of the Conference on Disarmament.

In response to the terrible tragedy of landmines which affects over 60 countries, an amended Protocol II of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects was concluded earlier this year, after two and a half years of negotiations. Pakistan declared at the time that it did not export landmines. We have scrapped an entire programme for the development of anti-personnel landmines to conform with Protocol II. We will complete the detectability requirements well ahead of the stipulated period of 10 years.

The immediate challenge is to ensure the widest possible acceptance of the new rules on the development, use and transfer of landmines. We hope that cooperation for the transfer of technologies to implement these rules will be forthcoming. Another priority is the formidable yet compelling task of clearing the millions of mines that are continuing to kill innocent people. Pressing ahead immediately for a global ban on anti-personnel landmines may respond to popular sentiment but could prove fruitless. It could also undermine the immediate aim of securing widest adherence to the newly adopted Protocol. The goal of prohibition will become realistic once alternatives to the use of anti-personnel landmines for self-defence are developed and become available.

While nuclear weapons remain the focus of international concern, we cannot ignore the threats to peace, and breaches of the peace, emanating from conventional weapons. There are four dimensions to the threat posed by conventional weapons today: first, the insecurity and instability created in several regions of the world by the larger production and acquisition of armaments by some States, which threaten other States, especially smaller neighbouring countries; secondly, the growing and unequal concentration of sophisticated and increasingly lethal conventional weapons in the hands of only a few advanced States, thus further exacerbating the inequality between the developed and developing countries; thirdly, the incentives for the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction created by the imbalance in conventional weapons in certain parts of the world; and fourthly, the exacerbation of conflicts and tensions within and among States by the illegal transfer of weapons, including small arms, for terrorists and criminals, and the denial of the legitimate means of self-defence to peoples struggling for self-determination and national independence.

The international community must address all the above dimensions of conventional weapons in a comprehensive and systematic way. So far, the approach

has been partial and piecemeal. Pakistan subscribes to the concept of promoting confidence among States through transparency. We have submitted reports annually to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. Unfortunately, transparency will not by itself remove the danger posed by unequal levels of conventional arms in certain regions.

Similarly, the bid to control the transfer of armaments, without regard to such regional asymmetries, can actually accentuate imbalance and the threat to peace, instead of ameliorating the situation. We welcome the guidelines on the transfer of conventional weapons adopted by the Disarmament Commission in the context of General Assembly resolution 46/36 H. It would be appropriate for the Commission or the Conference on Disarmament to examine the feasibility of evolving guidelines for the production, transfer and deployment of conventional weapons as a means of promoting regional and global stability.

Pakistan believes that in most instances the regional approach offers the most effective framework successfully to negotiate agreements for conventional arms control as well as aspects of non-proliferation. The General Assembly has asked the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate principles for conventional arms control within the regional and subregional framework. This will make a useful contribution to specific negotiations for conventional arms control in various regions of the world. The Conference on Disarmament should commence this process in 1997.

A close examination of the situation in various parts of the world indicates that both conventional arms control and nuclear non-proliferation can be facilitated by addressing and resolving the underlying causes of conflicts and disputes. Arms are acquired by most States for defence against threats that arise almost always from conflicts and disputes in their region. Thus the political differences among the parties must be addressed together with the disarmament dimensions of regional security.

South Asia has been described as the most dangerous place in the world. The cold war is not over in our region; indeed it often heats up to fever pitch. The core cause of tension in South Asia is the Kashmir dispute and the brutal denial of the right of self-determination of the Kashmiri people. We hope that conditions will soon be created for the commencement of a genuine bilateral dialogue between Pakistan and India to resolve the Kashmir dispute, in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolutions. Such bilateral talks can be supplemented by measures at the regional and global levels to address the interrelated problems of security, arms control and non-proliferation in South Asia.

In her address to the General Assembly on 3 October 1996, the Prime Minister of Pakistan proposed the convening of a multilateral conference on peace and security in South Asia. Such a conference could promote the following three goals: measures to remove the underlying causes of conflict and tension between India and Pakistan, including Kashmir; agreements on conventional arms control and confidence-building measures, including mutually agreed force ratios and measures to avoid surprise attack; and measures for nuclear restraint, avoidance of nuclear-weapons proliferation, and non-development and non-deployment of nuclear-capable missiles.

After a year during which our neighbour made preparations for a second nuclear test, when it declared that its nuclear option is open, when it reiterated its determination to develop and deploy nuclear-capable missiles and when it opposed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the international community must surely recognize that a solution to the security problems of South Asia is indispensable for the success of the global endeavours for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Pakistan sees its security as being closely dependent on the success of these endeavours. We shall therefore continue to contribute actively and constructively to the work of all forums where the goals of global and regional disarmament are being pursued and promoted.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.

United Nations A/C.1/51/PV.11

General Assembly

Fifty-first session

Official Records

First Committee

11th Meeting

Tuesday, 22 October 1996, 10 a.m.

New York

Chairman: Mr. Sychou ..... (Belarus)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda items 60 to 81 (*continued*)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chairman: Before calling on the first speaker, I would like to welcome Fellows of the United Nations disarmament fellowship programme, who are here today to observe the proceedings of the First Committee.

Mr. Muhammed (Ethiopia): Allow me on behalf of my delegation to extend to you, Sir, and to the other members of the Bureau our congratulations on your elections to lead the deliberations of the First Committee. I wish to assure you, Sir, of my delegation's full cooperation and support in the discharge of the heavy responsibilities bestowed on you as Chairman of this important Committee.

Ethiopia believes that the elimination of weapons of mass destruction remains high on the international community's disarmament agenda in the post-cold war era. The production, stockpiling and proliferation of these cruel weapons continues unabated, posing a major challenge to international peace and security. The challenge and potential danger posed by weapons of mass destruction can be avoided only through the total elimination of such weapons. This requires, above all, firm commitment and practical action by all concerned, in particular by those who produce, possess, acquire and transfer these weapons.

After more than two and half years of intensive multilateral negotiations, the international community has shown its strong determination for the cessation of nuclear tests by endorsing the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Because it constrains the development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and ends the development of new advanced types of nuclear weapons, the cessation of nuclear-weapon-test explosions constitutes an important step in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. In this context, we believe that, in spite of its shortcomings, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty will contribute to the process of nuclear disarmament and to the enhancement of international peace and security.

Ethiopia has signed the CTBT, and firmly supports the effective implementation of the Treaty. We believe that a universal and internationally verifiable CTBT will provide further impetus for consolidating the non-proliferation regime. We are also convinced that the time is now ripe to start nuclear disarmament negotiations that would lead to an agreement on the elimination of nuclear weapons within a specific time-frame. In this connection, my delegation wishes to stress that serious consideration should be given to the proposal made by 28 non-aligned and other countries members of the Conference on Disarmament, relating to a programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction has been open for signature since January 1993. The trigger point of the deposit of 65 instruments of ratification, which will ensure the entry into force of the Convention, now seems very

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close, with 64 States having already deposited their instruments of ratification with the Secretary-General. We hope that the one remaining ratification needed will be secured in the very near future so that the Convention can enter into force as soon as possible. Ratification of the Convention, in particular by the two declared chemical-weapon States, the United States of America and the Russian Federation, is indispensable to ensure that the basic aim of the Convention — the elimination of all chemical weapons and related production facilities within a specific time-frame — can be achieved.

Ethiopia fully supported the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction throughout the process of its negotiations and final adoption. This active interest and participation, and the fact that Ethiopia has already deposited the instrument of ratification of the Treaty, testify to its firm commitment to the eradication of chemical weapons. While Ethiopia is committed to the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, we, however, find it necessary to express our concern at the ongoing attempt to enlarge restrictions on chemicals and chemical-related technologies for developing countries beyond what is stipulated in the treaty. This, in our opinion, could create an atmosphere of distrust and undermine the effectiveness of the treaty. We believe that one of the basic principles of the Chemical Weapons Convention is equal treatment of all Member States that are parties to the instrument. In this context, we strongly emphasize the need to foster confidence and trust for the effective implementation of the Convention.

Regional security is an integral part of global security. After more than 30 years of strenuous efforts, African countries have achieved their long-sought-after objective of declaring Africa a nuclear-weapon-free zone in April this year by signing the Treaty of Pelindaba. We are pleased that this Treaty has been accepted by four of the major nuclear-weapon States, and that the remaining major nuclear Power has also indicated that it would take a similar step. This Treaty represents an important step towards strengthening the non-proliferation regime, promoting general and complete disarmament and enhancing regional and international peace and security.

The Treaty of Pelindaba, together with previously concluded regional nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaties, namely the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga and Bangkok, expands the regime of nuclear-weapon-free zones to cover a significantly large part of the world, thus contributing to nuclear disarmament and the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free world. In the light of this, Ethiopia supports the initiative of Brazil and other countries to submit a First Committee draft resolution on a nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas.

The problem of landmines represents one of the most troubling challenges confronting the international community in this post-cold-war period. Anti-personnel landmines in particular continue to pose a serious threat to the lives of millions of people in many parts of the world and gravely affect economic, social and humanitarian activities. The problems of anti-personnel landmines are not limited to their indiscriminate use in armed conflicts, since once conflicts have ceased, they continue to cause casualties and human suffering, and hinder efforts at nation-building, economic reconstruction and development. To reverse this situation and to find a lasting solution to the problem of anti-personnel landmines, concerted efforts should be made at the national, regional and international levels.

Ethiopia is one of the many African countries that are seriously affected by anti-personnel landmines. In recognition of the gravity of this problem, the Government of Ethiopia, with the technical assistance and cooperation of a number of countries, has embarked on a demining programme. While the Government of Ethiopia is encouraged by the results achieved and is committed to continuing the demining programme, it is recognized at the same time that much remains to be done to get rid of all the landmines scattered in various parts of the country, and that this immense task cannot be completed without international support in the form of technical and financial assistance.

My delegation is pleased to state that, at the regional level, the Organization of African Unity has given serious attention to the problem of anti-personnel landmines, and that member States of that organization have committed themselves to a total ban on the production, use, stockpiling, sale and export of such weapons. We are also encouraged by the similar positions taken in other regions of the world.

The efforts in various multilateral forums to strengthen the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects and its amended Protocol II, as well as the moratoriums on the export of anti-personnel landmines already declared by some mine-exporting countries, are all important steps to halt the proliferation and use of landmines. We believe that these efforts should culminate

in a global ban on anti-personnel landmines through the conclusion of a legally binding international instrument. In this context, Ethiopia fully supports the draft resolution on an international agreement to ban anti-personnel landmines which is being circulated in document A/C.1/51/L.46 for the consideration of the First Committee.

Mr. Nkurlu (Tanzania): Mr. Chairman, allow me to associate myself with other speakers in congratulating you and the other members of the Bureau on your election to steer the deliberations of the First Committee. We confidently look forward to a successful and productive session under your able and skilful guidance. I pledge my delegation's support and cooperation.

A year ago, the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations afforded us an opportunity to take stock of the achievements and shortcomings in the entire disarmament and international security mechanism during the period of the Organization's existence. While mixed feelings were expressed with regard to the past, we saw a future full of enthusiasm and optimism. As we meet here again a year later and indeed less than four years from a new millennium, what does the international community have in store for the future of our children? What kind of world will they live in? And does the United Nations have a vision for their future?

If these children had their way, the response to those questions would be spontaneous. They would want a peaceful, secure, prosperous and, hence, stable world. They would choose a world free of wars, ethnic conflicts and violence. They would want to cast aside vices which breed misery and poverty and which perpetuate instability. Of course, they would love to see a world free of weapons of mass destruction, stockpiles of fissile material and above all, many fewer conventional weapons, to enable them to live a peaceful life.

Are we anywhere near these objectives and aspirations? Are we genuinely, deliberately and steadily moving towards a stable, secure and prosperous world? Unfortunately not. The world is still fraught with civil wars and ethnic violence which cost the lives of thousands of innocent people. The world still possesses more than 20,000 deadly nuclear warheads and enormous stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons which pose a great threat to international peace and security. Conventional weapons are vigorously being targeted at conflict-afflicted areas and their production is escalating in a number of countries, especially in the industrialized North.

We are concerned at the existence of so many weapons around the world at levels beyond the legitimate defense needs of nations. The attention given to nuclear weapons reflects the great concern of the international community over the great danger posed to international peace and security by these weapons of mass destruction. Regrettably, notwithstanding the fact that nuclear arms pose the gravest threat to world peace, these have not received the priority consideration they deserve in the appropriate bilateral and multilateral forums.

The START II Treaty — which was signed early in 1993 and was envisaged to reduce the number of warheads for all strategic weapons to 7,500 — has yet to take effect. Some nuclear-weapon States still cling to their nuclear deterrence policy. That is why they are increasing their nuclear weapon cooperation to unprecedented levels. This is a clear indication of their resolve to retain and perfect their nuclear arsenals.

While taking cognizance of the recent adoption of a Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), I note that it is regrettable that the Treaty failed to live up to the expectations of the majority of States. As a staunch supporter and advocate of the CTBT over the years, Tanzania has always considered such a Treaty to constitute a major breakthrough towards the total elimination of these horrendous weapons.

Unfortunately, the text which was adopted renders the Treaty less than comprehensive, as it allows the most technologically sophisticated nuclear States to continue the vertical proliferation of nuclear arsenals through other means. The Treaty makes no significant contribution towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework; rather, it reinforces the perpetual exclusivity of a nuclear weapon club.

In this respect, my delegation commends the timely advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice which asserts that the threat or use of nuclear weapons is generally contrary to the rules of international humanitarian law applicable to armed conflicts. This opinion has opened a new chapter in the legal framework of nuclear disarmament by rightly recognizing that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith, and to bring to conclusion, negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. Once again, this ruling reminds us of an obligation already undertaken by nuclear-weapon States under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

It is in this context that we sincerely appeal to nuclear-weapon States to support the programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons spearheaded by the group of 28 in the Conference on Disarmament. With the current favourable international environment, nuclear-weapon States need to go a step further by subscribing in practice to the eventual elimination of nuclear arsenals. This means they must stop, reverse and ultimately put an end to the scourge of nuclear proliferation.

In the same vein, my delegation supports the holding of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament to review critical aspects of nuclear disarmament in order to facilitate a better and safer future for our children.

In the quest for world peace and security, my delegation attaches great importance to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. With 64 countries having so far ratified the Convention, it is saddening to note that those with the largest stockpiles of weapons have yet to do so. The effectiveness of the Chemical Weapons Convention, which is only one country short of reaching the threshold for its entry into force, will be seriously undermined if the United States and the Russian Federation in particular remain outside the Convention. Therefore, the importance of their speedy ratification of the Convention cannot be overemphasized.

Over the years, conventional weapons have been a major factor fuelling conflicts ranging from full-fledged wars to various forms of violence throughout the world. Anti-personnel landmines are just one category of such weapons which have caused havoc and misery to tens of thousands of people, mostly to innocent women and children. While we would welcome a ban on anti-personnel landmines in the near future, Tanzania is of the view that banning these weapons will not solve the real problems if it is done without a comprehensive framework which addresses all aspects of the problem, including those of producers of the weapons, and the underlying political conflicts of interest which these weapons serve and sustain.

Most important, the majority of the less-armed Member States, some of which see these weapons as the "weapons of the weak", need to assure themselves that efforts to ban these anti-personnel landmines are motivated by a genuine desire to pursue disarmament, and not by the insatiable appetite of those already over-armed to disarm the rest of the world and hold it to political ransom.

Concrete action in the field of nuclear and conventional disarmament on the part of the nuclear-weapon States and other military Powers would serve to demonstrate such genuine commitment to work towards a safer world and also serve as an added incentive to disarm.

The efforts to ban conventional arms will be rendered equally useless if the international community does not strive to reduce drastically the production of these weapons and to stop deliberately promoting their export, especially in areas where violence and conflict are endemic. In addition, whatever measures are taken to ban conventional weapons must not detract us from the real priority, which is weapons of mass destruction.

The destructive capacity of an anti-personnel landmines is a drop in the ocean compared to an explosion of one nuclear warhead. Presenting a paper early this year in New York, the Nobel Peace Prize recipient Joseph Rotblat rightly pointed out that,

> "Nuclear bombs are made to appear as not much different quantitatively from the ordinary bombs with which most of us are nowadays familiar. A nuclear war is made to look like a larger scale conventional war. Nuclear weapons are not a larger scale version of conventional weapons. They are in an entirely different category. The energy released when a single atom of plutonium undergoes fission is tens of millions times greater than the energy released per atom in a conventional explosion."

Indeed, the elimination of these horrible weapons must remain our main preoccupation.

Against this backdrop, Tanzania fully supports the establishment of the nuclear-weapon-free zone in the southern hemisphere and adjacent areas. This will be a significant development complementing other similar efforts in various parts of the world, which have resulted in the Treaty of Tlatelolco for Latin America, the Treaty of Rarotonga for the South Pacific, the Treaty of Bangkok for South-East Asia, and the Treaty of Pelindaba for Africa. We hope, after half the world is declared nuclear-free, that this will send a clear signal to the North to follow suit and free itself and the rest of the world from the menace of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

The establishment of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean is a matter of paramount importance to my country. When, 26 years ago, the Non-Aligned Movement summit in Lusaka decided to establish the zone, it was guided by a

strong commitment to work towards the realization of the goals of peace, security and stability in the region. Regrettably, for almost two decades now, the implementation of the zone has eluded the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, which has been deserted by some permanent members of the Security Council and other major maritime users of the Ocean.

During the initial years, the cold war prevented progress towards the intended goal. Now, paradoxically, with a greatly improved global environment that encourages mutual trust and cooperation among nations, it has not been possible to rekindle that spirit within the Ad Hoc Committee. We cannot but express our concern about the security of the region and about the grave implications of the presence of external military forces in the Indian Ocean region. We call upon all the parties concerned, especially the three Western permanent members of the Security Council, to gather political courage, rejoin the Ad Hoc Committee and work jointly with the rest of the world towards establishing a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean region.

We wish to express our profound hope that the deliberations of this session will contribute positively to the acceleration of the disarmament process, with a clear focus on weapons of mass destruction. Taking a leaf from the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice, coupled with the prevailing conducive international environment, the international community must strive to build a safer place for our children.

Mr. Pham Quang Vinh (Viet Nam): May I first extend to you, Mr. Chairman, and to the other members of the Bureau, the warmest congratulations of the delegation of Viet Nam. Aware of the heavy workload ahead for this Committee, my delegation assures you, Sir, and the Bureau full cooperation in bringing the Committee's work to a fruitful conclusion.

The question of international security and disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament, continues to be high on the agenda of the international community and that of the United Nations system. The end of the cold war opens new opportunities, and the danger of a nuclear holocaust has been driven further away. Progress has been achieved in several areas in the field of disarmament and international security. Yet great challenges exist. Wars and conflicts persist. Arsenals of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, though reduced, remain large.

Speaking today, I have the benefit of the analysis already presented by many delegations during the last six days of the general debate. Most prominent is the expressed recognition of cooperation as a necessary premise for assuring progress in the field of disarmament and international security. Sharing that view, we further call for greater joint efforts, and we highlight the important role of multilateral mechanisms in the common endeavour towards achieving a better, more secure world.

Today we are witnessing renewed momentum for progress towards nuclear disarmament. My delegation welcomes recent positive achievements in this process, among them the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the review and strengthening of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones Four such zones are now in place. We welcome the idea of a nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere.

Highlighted among the positive developments are also those in South-East Asia. The region's economy continues to grow dynamically. Joint efforts are being made by the countries of the region further to enhance cooperation in all fields. In this respect, the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) has been playing an important and constructive role. A case in point is that last year, on ASEAN's initiative, the South-East Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) was established. SEANWFZ has been broadly welcomed. It is hoped that it will soon be recognized by all nuclear-weapon countries.

International security is multifold, and the world we are living in today is increasingly interdependent. While recognizing the importance of cooperation and compromise in achieving any multilateral disarmament treaties and agreements, we must further stress the fundamental elements upon which these achievements need to be based and to be made sustainable. The most important principle remains that security must be ensured for all States, especially for small and non-nuclear-weapon States. True treaties must be negotiated and adopted on the basis of respect for the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of goodwill, fairness and good faith. Further, they must serve as the building blocks towards attaining the broader, ultimate common goal, not as elements to delay or even to compromise it.

Thus, besides the positive results achieved, there is yet much to be done, if viewed in the light of this purpose. The CTBT, while being welcome, must become a component of the pursuit of the elimination of all nuclear weapons.

Considering it a positive step, Viet Nam has signed this Treaty. At the same time, it calls for concrete action to be taken to free this world of these horrible weapons. Viet Nam also stresses that verification activities must be carried out in a fair and impartial manner, with full respect for the sovereignty of States.

Important commitments were adopted as part of the indefinite extension of the NPT last year. Those commitments — among them the strengthening of the NPT review, the initiation of negotiations towards nuclear disarmament, and assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States against the threat or use of nuclear weapons — are not to be forgotten. They constitute elements of the forthcoming NPT review process and must be realized. In that respect, the proposal for a programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons put forward by 28 countries at the Conference on Disarmament deserves serious consideration.

As the challenges ahead remain numerous, a message needs to be renewed. We must build upon the achievements already recorded and make further progress through joint efforts based on mutual confidence, mutual respect and security for all States. Viet Nam will make active contributions in the common endeavour to make this world a better world.

Mr. Molander (Sweden): Let me first extend to you, Mr. Chairman, my congratulations on your election and my pleasure at seeing you presiding over our deliberations.

The last time I spoke in the First Committee was in November 1995. At that time I had to report that, in spite of great efforts, the Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects had not been able to reach a conclusion on the revision of Protocol II. This time, I am happy to say, I can report to you, as President of that Conference, its successful conclusion in May of this year. The revision of the Landmine Protocol was finally achieved, albeit through a particularly difficult and complicated negotiating process.

During that last phase of negotiations there was a sudden and growing support for a total ban on anti-personnel mines. When Sweden, as the first country, formally proposed a total ban in August 1994, only a few States parties supported that proposal. At the conclusion of the Review Conference, more than 40 States advocated a total ban. However, that could not be fully reflected in the outcome of the review, particularly as many countries still feel that this weapon remains a necessary and legitimate asset of their territorial defence.

As a result, the outcome of the Conference was described by some observers as an inadequate compromise and a failure. I emphatically disagree with such judgements. On the contrary, the amended Protocol sets a global minimum standard which, if implemented, will definitely save lives. Let me give you a short list of those new provisions that strengthen the rules of the Protocol's original version.

The scope of application of the Protocol has been extended to cover internal conflicts. This constitutes a breakthrough in the development of international humanitarian law.

The use of non-detectable anti-personnel landmines has been forbidden.

The use of anti-personnel landmines that do not self-destruct and self-deactivate, with a combined reliability of 99.9 per cent, within 120 days of activation outside fenced, marked and monitored minefields has been forbidden.

Anti-sensing devices on all types of mine have been forbidden.

The general restrictions regarding the use of all types of mine have been strengthened, particularly regarding marking and recording.

The rules to protect peacekeeping and other forces and missions of the United Nations, as well as humanitarian missions and missions from the International Committee of the Red Cross, from the effects of minefields and mined areas have been substantially strengthened.

The States parties are obliged to impose penal sanctions individually on any person within their jurisdiction for violations of the material provisions of the Protocol. Thus, violations against the Landmine Protocol will basically be treated as war crimes.

States parties are obliged to disseminate knowledge about the substantive provisions of the Protocol and to issue relevant operating procedures to their armed forces.

The revised Protocol lays down a strict responsibility for the mine-laying party either to clear or to maintain the mines that it has in place in the course of conflict.

A new article on assistance and technological cooperation aims at sharing technology in mine clearance and rehabilitation of victims.

A new article prohibits the transfer of non-detectable anti-personnel mines and long-lived remote-delivery mines with immediate effect. It further restricts transfer of all mines, particularly to States that are not parties to the Protocol, and prohibits the transfer of mines to any entity that is not a State or an agent of a State.

While it proved impossible to reach consensus on a verification system in case of alleged violations, the Conference agreed on a system of yearly meetings of the States parties. At those meetings the operation and the status of the Protocol will be discussed, and, indeed, implementation issues may be raised.

It was decided to hold the next Review Conference in the year 2001, that is, five years from now.

Since the conclusion of the Review Conference a number of initiatives have been taken on the national, regional and international levels towards the goal of a comprehensive ban on anti-personnel landmines. To give only a few examples, on the unilateral level my own Government recently took the step of complementing the Swedish call for a global ban with a unilateral ban on all anti-personnel mines, including the destruction of our substantive stockpile within a set time-frame. On the regional level, an agreement to ban anti-personnel mines was signed in June between six countries in Central America.

On the international level, a few weeks ago a large group of countries joined in the Ottawa Declaration, in which they committed themselves to work for the earliest possible conclusion of a legally binding international agreement to ban anti-personnel mines. On the same occasion, Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy announced that he was hoping to gather a large number of countries to sign an international ban on anti-personnel mines in December of next year.

These initiatives are certainly useful and important. To many countries, however, anti-personnel landmines constitute an important part of their national defence. Consequently, the amended Landmine Protocol will for the foreseeable future remain the only universally acceptable regulation of the use of landmines. It constitutes the best possible common ground for the purpose of reducing or eliminating the risk to civilians and noncombatants, both for countries using landmines and for countries renouncing their use.

I think it is important to emphasize that under these rules none of the present crisis situations relating to landmines could have occurred on such a scale. For this reason, swift and universal adherence to and implementation of the amended Landmine Protocol are of paramount importance until such day that all States accept a total ban and all anti-personnel mines are destroyed. The rules of the amended Landmine Protocol will save lives and reduce or alleviate future landmine tragedies.

Let me also recall in this context the first success of the Review Conference, namely, the adoption in October 1995 of Protocol IV banning blinding laser weapons. The new Protocol prohibits the employment of laser weapons specifically designed to cause permanent blindness as well as the transfer of any such weapons to any State or non-State entity. This is a landmark event in the development of international humanitarian law. For the first time, a weapon developed and produced in prototype has been banned in a proactive way before it was even deployed. This, I submit, is the ideal way. States did not wait for the catastrophe to become a fact, as in the case of anti-personnel landmines; they preempted an inhumane weapon's development and banned it.

In conclusion, the first Review Conference made considerable progress through restrictions and partial prohibitions on landmines and through banning completely a new type of weapon.

Tomorrow, on 23 October at 11 a.m. in Conference Room 4, I will chair an informal meeting to discuss the amended Protocol II and the new Protocol IV and to provide a legal analysis of them with a view to facilitating the ratification process for States. The meeting will hear a panel of experts from the Russian Federation, South Africa and the United States, as well as from the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs and the International Committee of the Red Cross. You are all cordially invited to participate.

Mr. Ople (Philippines): Mr. Chairman, please allow me to express on behalf of the Philippine delegation our congratulations on your election to preside over the First Committee. As we pledge our full cooperation to you and your fellow officers, we would also like to express our confidence that the work of our Committee will benefit greatly under your wise leadership. Please allow me also to express my delegation's deep appreciation and respect for your predecessor, Ambassador Erdenechuluun of Mongolia.

Events in recent years show a clear momentum in favour of disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament. To our credit, and to the credit of the United Nations, many of these developments were conceived or spurred on by our Committee. Much can also be attributed to the principled advocacy of the countries members of the Non-Aligned Movement. The Non-Aligned Movement's vigilance, determination and perseverance have served to ensure that disarmament remains a global priority and that specific disarmament issues are addressed seriously and earnestly.

A Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is in place. Nuclear-weapon-free zones exist all over the globe and are on the verge of consolidation. A clear legal obligation has been identified by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and erected to buttress the overwhelming political will of States to eliminate nuclear weapons. The nuclear non-proliferation regime has been extended indefinitely. In one part of the world, whole arsenals of nuclear weapons have been dismantled, while in another part of the world, potential nuclear proliferation has been averted.

The Chemical Weapons Convention is about to enter into force. Moves are being made to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention. States have strengthened the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. There are moves and initiatives towards a total ban on landmines. The illicit transfer of small arms is also being addressed. Preparations are being made for the United Nations to devote a special session of the General Assembly to disarmament.

Many of these moves were not thought to be possible just a few years ago. The relative equilibrium brought about by the cold war caused the world to rely more on a stability based on terror than on a peace based on free will. Today, we have before us the blossoming of our collective aspirations.

Nevertheless, those developments, historic though they may be, suffer from flaws created by partisan politics and the refusal to abandon cold-war values. Although there is much cause for optimism, there is also cause for concern.

Potential and actual conflicts continue to beset us. While the possibility that nuclear weapons might be employed in these conflicts has been greatly reduced, the toll in lives, material costs and lost opportunities for progress and prosperity continue and can never be acceptable.

National and regional resources are consumed not only by actual conflicts but by the insecurity and instability caused by the continuing threat of weapons of mass destruction and the unregulated movement and use of conventional weapons, particularly those that are indiscriminate in character. Massive resources continue to be devoted to weapons of war at levels that clearly go beyond the need of States to defend themselves.

In my region, where cold war tensions once reigned supreme, we have established a nuclear-weapon-free zone. There was a time when this would not have been possible. In 1991, the Philippine Senate rejected the agreement that would have allowed the biggest overseas United States military facilities to continue to remain in our country. In so doing, we removed the final obstacle for negotiations to begin in the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) for a South-East Asia nuclear-weapon-free zone. Four years later, the gathered heads of the ASEAN nations and their counterparts from the rest of South-East Asia signed in Bangkok a Treaty that announced to the world the determination of the countries of South-East Asia to be free from nuclear weapons.

Our colleagues from the other nuclear-weapon-free zones welcomed the Bangkok Treaty, as did other countries. But some have questioned it. The States parties to the Bangkok Treaty are, in all sincerity, trying to work out their differences with those States. We are committed, however, truly to freeing ourselves of nuclear weapons.

Today, we are faced with the challenge of linking the nuclear-weapon-free zones that cover large parts of the globe. We support the suggestion of Brazil that we work out means by which the nuclear-weapon-free zones of the world can coordinate and work together for a nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas.

While the ICJ has come up with welcome pronouncements on obligations to negotiate nuclear-disarmament agreements, it has issued a controversial Opinion on the issue of the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons. The Court's Opinion on this point is so general that it could actually apply to any number of non-conventional and conventional weapons. The Philippines, together with several other nations, presented its position before the Court. We saw the overwhelming merit of the many arguments presented by other States in favour of the illegality of the threat and use of nuclear weapons. The Philippines hopes that the Court's Opinion will not result in a never-ending debate over legal interpretations, in our Committee or elsewhere. Rather, we

would like to focus on the Court's unanimous ruling that there exists the obligation not only to begin, but also to conclude, negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective control.

We are on the verge of establishing the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, which will be primarily responsible for monitoring compliance with the CTBT. The CTBT suffers from a serious flaw, since it allows the improvement of nuclear arsenals and related technologies through computer simulations and laboratory testing. It fails to address the question of nuclear disarmament, and its entry-into-force provision is also a cause for concern. However, the Philippines places great stock in the Treaty. We see it as a beginning, rather than an end in itself, and as an important political and legal step on the part of the declared nuclear-weapon States towards meeting calls for nuclear disarmament. Once the Treaty comes before the Philippine Senate for ratification, I am confident that we shall look upon it with favour.

There is merit on both sides of the nuclear non-proliferation debate. Gross inequities exist in our nuclear-weapons world, but extreme dangers exist as well. Thus, efforts must continue to make the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) truly universal by bringing in the few countries that still remain outside it. The NPT and its indefinite extension are products of historic compromises, with certain burdens placed on the nuclear-weapon States. They must continue to be sincere in their commitments. For it is their good faith, first and foremost, that can make universal acceptance of the NPT a reality. Among those commitments is the willingness to ban the production of fissile materials for weapons purposes. The Conference on Disarmament must now produce a document banning the further production of fissile material, a document to which the nuclear-weapon States can adhere.

The issue of security assurances for the non-nuclear States has been before us now for almost three decades and has not lost its relevance. The Philippines views this issue not simply as one in which the non-nuclear States care only for their own safety from nuclear harm — a faulty premise to begin with — but rather as another means of creating the political and legal conditions under which nuclear disarmament can be achieved. We welcome the fact that China and Russia agree with the Non-Aligned Movement on this issue and hope that we in the First Committee, as well as the Conference on Disarmament, can work towards an instrument binding nuclear-weapon States to provide a uniform guarantee.

The opening for signature of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction in 1993 was not only a major step towards the elimination of these dreadful weapons, but also a powerful symbol of the end of the cold war. It proved that the world wanted to take a step back and away from the insanity of bipolar confrontation. In this context, it would be ironic if the United States and Russia, which possess the largest stockpiles of these deadly concoctions, fail to become part of this global pact. As we wait for the Chemical Weapons Convention to enter into force, and as we prepare to implement it, through next year's first meeting of the States parties, we must make sure that there will be no discrimination in its implementation.

There have been many new developments since the conclusion in 1972 of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. Technology for the production of these weapons has improved. But there have also been improvements in the commitment and capacity of States to deal with weapons of mass destruction. In this regard, my country supports the work of the Ad Hoc Group established by the Special Conference of the States Parties to the Convention in 1994 to find ways to strengthen the Convention through a compliance protocol. This compliance protocol should also include measures to address the danger posed by the possible use of this weapon by terrorist and criminal elements.

Threats to the well-being and prosperity of human beings come in forms other than nuclear, chemical and national conflicts, and violate the dignity of life. Landmines and similar insidious devices are a matter of grave concern for all people. The Philippines has declared a total ban on landmines. Although for a time the Philippines had landmines in its arsenal, these were never deployed. Very early on, my Government recognized the sheer inhumanity and indiscriminate nature of this weapon. To put teeth behind this, and to show how seriously we view the issue, the Department of Foreign Affairs of my country is preparing legislation that will criminalize the use or possession of, or trade in, landmines in the Philippines.

The Philippines is in favour of a total international ban on landmines. We support the initiatives of the United States and Canada in creating an international agreement

totally banning them. While we give our full support to this initiative, the Philippines joins many others in expressing the hope that attention will also continue to be focused on landmine clearance and assisting landmine victims.

We welcome the strengthening of Protocol II of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects. We support moves towards the establishment of an international landmines register. But we would like to point out that when we begin the process of negotiating a total ban, these measures should not in any way be invoked to legitimize the use of even the most "innocuous" landmines or to delay negotiations.

The illicit transfer of small arms also poses a serious threat to stability, particularly in the context of internal conflicts, terrorism and criminal organizations. We continue to participate in and support arms transparency measures, as well as those that prohibit the illicit transfer of arms. In particular, we support the continued study and monitoring of this issue, whether through a group of Government experts or through a report by the Secretary-General.

As I said earlier, the pace of our work to rid the world of nuclear weapons has picked up. We must remain firm and committed to this end. Much more remains to be done, and we should avoid slowing our momentum or being distracted by those who use other disarmament issues to do so — although, ironically, such issues may be equally important. These issues should not be used for partisan political objectives or to distract the attention of the world from nuclear disarmament.

The Philippines views disarmament as one of two important means of achieving meaningful peace. The other is peaceful dialogue, together with efforts to build confidence, trust and greater understanding. The world has seen a similar momentum in this regard. In my region, on an official, ministerial level, we have established the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum. On another, informal, level we have informal forums for discussions on the South China Sea. We are also witnessing throughout the region an increase in academic forums to discuss security. One forum deserves particular attention, having contributed to greater security and political understanding in my region: the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific.

It is time to build on what we have achieved and work for a phased programme of progressive and deep reductions in nuclear arsenals with the ultimate aim of their total elimination; and we must do so within a time-bound framework. We must continue on the road to nuclear disarmament, taking on more challenges in other disarmament fields as necessary, but we should never waver in our task of removing once and for all these weapons of unimaginable destruction.

Armaments are obtained on the basis of perceived notions of security. Arsenals are built to defend against enemies. But the enemy consists not so much of one State that has an outstanding issue of a conflicting claim with another State. The enemy is misunderstanding; the enemy is lack of confidence; the enemy is mistrust. These are enemies that are not defeated by force of arms. On the contrary, these are enemies that can only be conquered by putting our collective will behind the task of achieving true and meaningful disarmament.

Mr. Larraín (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): At the outset I should like to express to you, Mr. Chairman, the warm congratulations of my delegation on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee during this fifty-first session of the General Assembly. We are confident that your vast diplomatic experience will make it possible for our deliberations to be very fruitful. Please also convey our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau. I should also like, Sir, to pay tribute to the important and sensitive work done by your predecessor, Ambassador Erdenechuluun of Mongolia, and for the efficient support that we have consistently received from the Secretariat.

We can say with satisfaction that 1996 has been a year of exceptional achievements for Chile in the sphere of disarmament. First, together with more than 120 States, we joined in signing a universal convention of historic significance: the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. That instrument enshrines a definitive ban on nuclear explosions — a priority goal of Chile's foreign policy, in the attainment of which my country, with other American nations and other countries in the southern hemisphere, worked tirelessly over a period of several decades.

Chile's commitment to this Treaty, whose shortcomings and imperfections we have pointed out, and which we consider to be simply one further step along the road towards nuclear disarmament, is clear, as is evidenced by our active participation in the International Monitoring System, which will be the backbone of the CTBT

verification regime. Chile will be contributing with a network of six stations located on its continental territory, on Easter Island and on Juan Fernández Island, which will make possible systematic monitoring of the vast Pacific-Antarctic quadrant lying off our coasts.

As the representative of Chile to the Conference on Disarmament said, for our country, which is a State party to the Antarctic Treaty, the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the CTBT will add only the obligation not to conduct, encourage or participate in nuclear tests in non-jurisdictional areas. However, Chile believes that this obligation already exists for the entire community of nations as a matter of customary international law.

Accordingly, we believe that it is essential for all States that have already signed the CTBT, including the five nuclear-weapon States, to assume a firm commitment to act in consonance with the purpose of the Treaty immediately and throughout the period leading to its entry into force. Similarly, Chile believes that the Conference on Disarmament should immediately begin negotiations on a cut-off treaty prohibiting the production of fissionable material for military purposes.

Secondly, Chile ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention, an instrument that has been hailed as the first genuine disarmament Treaty inasmuch as it prohibits an entire category of weapons of mass destruction and provides for the elimination of existing arsenals. In so doing, Chile reaffirmed its will, together with Argentina and Brazil, in the Mendoza Accord, signed in September 1991 and subsequently adhered to by Uruguay, not to develop, produce, acquire, stockpile, retain, directly or indirectly transfer or use chemical or biological weapons. It is therefore a source of concern for Chile and the 64 countries that to date have deposited their instruments of ratification on the Chemical Weapons Convention that the two States possessing the largest chemical-weapons arsenals, the United States of America and the Russian Federation, have not yet ratified this instrument, which was conceived and drafted as a disarmament instrument and not simply a non-proliferation instrument.

There is no doubt that this delay harms not just the credibility of the Convention but also that of the forum in which it was negotiated and the principal actors whose prior agreement made it possible. Chile believes that it is timely and appropriate for the General Assembly to send strong signals of encouragement to both States to manifest their oft-proclaimed political will to become parties to the Convention prompt by ratifying it promptly.

Thirdly, on 17 June, Chile, together with 22 other States, was admitted as a member of the Conference on Disarmament, which we interpret as recognition of our vigorous and active promotion of international security through the encouragement of mutual trust, cooperation and support for forums, negotiations and instruments of disarmament.

All of these expressions of my country's commitment to disarmament are part of the broad vision of the need for peace and security, which, as the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Chile said to the General Assembly, require parallel action in the fields of social development, democracy and the promotion of human rights. The strategy of outward growth being implemented by many developing States, including Chile, also determines the internationalization of their economic and financial structures. As a result, borders have become more economic than physical and the economy has been internationalized to such an extent that no country can escape the effects of the destabilization that all conflicts produce.

In this way, the concepts of economic and international security have become closely linked. International stability has emerged as a precondition for equitable economic growth, which in turn is an essential aspect of internal stability and hence the consolidation and development of democracy and full respect for human rights. A more secure and stable world therefore would be one in which all States are prepared to assume a growing share of responsibility and sacrifice. With regard to this latter dimension, we must accept the challenge of the greater intrusiveness of truly effective verification mechanisms. Chile has accepted that challenge through its support of Programme "93+2" to enhance the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards mechanisms and through active participation in the preparations for the fourth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction that is to take place in Geneva at the end of November. The main purpose of that Conference should be to endow that Treaty with a verification regime comparable to that which makes the Chemical Weapons Convention the revolutionary instrument that it is. Moreover, my country attaches particular importance to the fourth special session of the General

Assembly devoted to disarmament because of its positive impact on the agenda for disarmament.

In the regional sphere, in which we have seen considerable advances in the last decade in terms of détente and confidence-building, Chile continues pursuing efforts to implement the Santiago Declaration of November 1995. In addition to the regular holding of meetings between the military Chiefs of Staff of Chile and Peru, we established last May, a standing committee for Chilean and Argentine security, conceived as a forum for dialogue on security matters through which the Governments of Argentina and Chile seek to achieve a qualitative correlation between the political and economic dimensions of their bilateral relations, which over the past seven years have made advances that I would not hesitate to qualify as vital for peace and stability in the southern cone of America.

Chile shares the international concern for the immense damage caused by anti-personnel landmines, which we consider excessively injurious and indiscriminate. Not only have we suspended for more than 10 years their production and export; we have also contributed to the efforts of the international community to clear mines over extensive rural areas of Central America, which until recently was the theatre of domestic conflicts having cross-border effects.

Finally, as a Party to the Antarctic Treaty and the Treaty of Tlatelolco, and welcoming the recent signing of the Pelindaba Treaty and of the Protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga by the nuclear-weapon States, we wish to announce our strong support for the initiatives of Brazil and New Zealand to establish the entire southern hemisphere and adjacent areas as nuclear-weapon-free zones.

It is fashionable to talk about the new positive conditions brought about by the end of the cold war, as if those conditions were automatically capable of bringing about greater international security. However, one only needs to take a glance at current regional or national conflicts with cross-border effects to see that the community of nations, and in particular the United Nations, cannot let down its guard and must continue to give impetus to a disarmament agenda, that by its very nature can never be too ambitious. The delegation of Chile commits its efforts and capacities to that end.

Mr. Calovski (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): May I begin my statement by expressing the great satisfaction of my delegation at seeing you, Sir, elected Chairman of the First Committee of the General Assembly. You can count on my delegation's full support and cooperation in your endeavours to bring the Committee's deliberations to a successful conclusion. I should also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election to their high posts.

At this as in prior sessions, the Committee will discuss the most current problems in the field of international security and disarmament; now, however, the international situation and the priorities of the States Members of the United Nations are different. The regional and global security agendas, in particular the priorities whose aim is the strengthening of international security, are changing constantly. The reason for this is, plainly speaking, that the character, quantity and weight of threats to international peace and security are changing, too.

The incentives for a policy in favour of strengthening international peace, progress and development are changing at the same time. We are seeing many changes in the development of many regions and countries, but the dangers of instability and the threats to peaceful development and to international peace and security are resistant to change. We see them every day on television screens.

It is not necessary to stress that the ordinary man or woman is not preoccupied with the possibility of the eruption of nuclear war or nuclear catastrophe. It is understood that such a threat to international peace and to peaceful development has been overcome; but, as I have already mentioned, threats and the roots of instability have not been eliminated. The progress of the disarmament process and its contribution to the strengthening of international security should therefore be the result of our Committee's deliberations this year.

The process of disarmament, which must continue, is not a technical affair nor an aim in itself. It is a very weighty political and security affair very closely linked with all aspects of international development and cooperation. Its main function is the strengthening of international security and stability. It is in total opposition to all forces, internal and foreign, that do not observe the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and international law and do not strictly abide by the principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of others and of mutual respect and the observance of interdependence.

Therefore, when we discuss this or that aspect of nuclear arms, other arms of mass destruction, conventional weapons and so on, we have to keep constantly in mind the

function of the activity we are going to undertake and pursue and the extent to which it makes the world, its regions and its countries more stable and more secure. The discussions on the banning of anti-personnel landmines are a very good example for the deliberations on all subjects on the disarmament agenda.

In short, the process of disarmament should be brought closer to ordinary men and women and should become the true interest of all Members of the United Nations, whatever their size. All countries, big or small, should be equally interested in preserving their security and in benefiting from international cooperation. The starting point in that should be the defence of their country. It is legitimate to possess arms for the purposes of national defence. The possession of more arms than are reasonably necessary for the defence of the country is a problem and a concern for other countries, particularly neighbouring ones. Plainly speaking, it creates security problems for the other countries, particularly, as I said, for the neighbouring ones. This problem can be overcome through the development of international cooperation and by undertaking various confidence-building measures, bilateral or multilateral, and pursuing transparent defence policies and activities with concrete measures in the context of current disarmament efforts.

The role of good-neighbourliness in all this is crucial. The General Assembly at its fiftieth session adopted a basic resolution of immense regional and global importance for the development of good-neighbourly relations among Balkan States. It is very important that it was co-sponsored by the Balkan States, all the members of the European Union and other European countries. I would like to stress with great satisfaction that some of the basic aims of resolution 50/80 B are already being implemented.

The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina ended with the conclusion of the Dayton Peace Agreement, but the work is far from done. The Dayton peace process needs a lot of internal and international support in order to become a process of development.

As far as my country, the Republic of Macedonia, is concerned, we are pleased to have normalized our relations with all States of the former Yugoslavia and with all our neighbours. We have established diplomatic relations and are developing beneficial cooperation with all of them, in accordance with the provisions of resolution 50/80 B. In accordance with our foreign policy of open borders and equality — and taking advantage of our geostrategic position as a central State in the Balkans — we are becoming an important place for the development of international cooperation in all of south-eastern Europe.

Although it was the cradle of European civilization, due to historical reasons our region has found itself on the margins of the development of European integration in the past few years. All the countries of our region are presently endeavouring to become members of the European Union and of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization as soon as possible. That direction is followed by my country as well; were it not pursued, the region would unavoidably face a situation in which there would be no development, but in which there would exist many unresolved security problems.

The General Assembly — on the proposal of this Committee and through the initiative of my delegation — requested through resolutions 50/80 B and 48/84 B the undertaking of measures and preventive activities aimed at the creation of a stable zone of peace and cooperation in the Balkans by the year 2000. This Committee will deliberate on this subject at the fifty-second session of the General Assembly next year on the basis of the Secretary-General's report, which was requested by these resolutions. We hope that the Secretariat will prepare a truly interesting and useful report in the spirit of these resolutions, one that will be creative and analytical in substance and will be focused on the only alternative available to the region: its Europeanization, its European future.

As I am mentioning the Europeanization of the Balkans, I would like to stress the importance of the very useful reply of the European Union and of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with it — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania — to the request in resolution 50/80 B for the development of good-neighbourly relations among Balkan States, which is contained in document A/51/376 of 19 September 1996. This very important document states that

> "A European perspective for the Balkans is therefore the best chance we have to heal the wounds of these years and fully reintegrate the area in the life of Europe, its political and social standards." *(A/51/376, para. 11)*

One very important aspect of international security and disarmament is the undertaking of preventive measures with the aim of not endangering international peace and security; reducing the quality of nuclear arsenals and eventually eliminating them; banning the production, stockpiling and

use of chemical and bacteriological weapons; securing full transparency with regard to conventional weapons and their production, stockpiling and trade; banning anti-personnel mines; and so on.

In all that, however, activities on the regional and global levels to prevent the eruption of armed conflicts — crises that could quickly turn into wars — are very important. Today there are no armed conflicts without international implications. In the future this will be even more true.

All violent conflicts are becoming concerns and problems for the international community and the United Nations. The statement by the representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross on the need to observe and develop further international humanitarian law was illustrative of this. The value of one person's life is much higher than that of many guns.

We should be clear, with regard to the disarmament process, about the fact that violent conflicts are generating huge needs for arms. Instead of pursuing disarmament, we will be facing armament as a result of violent conflicts. The dimensions of this danger are much greater in the light of our knowledge that, in a crisis situation, many arms fall into the hands of illegal military formations, terrorist groups and individuals.

As they face the potential eruption of future violent conflicts that seriously threaten international peace and security, the international community, the United Nations and international organizations for security and cooperation such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe should act to prevent them. It is therefore necessary to undertake measures against all activities aimed at fomenting crises, chaos and the disintegration of States. At the same time, it is necessary to give maximum priority and support to all activities whose aim is the development of a world without violence and a true system of global security.

I would like to inform the Committee that, last week in Skopje, the capital city of my country, an international seminar took place. Its subject was "*Agenda of preventive diplomacy: Theory and practice*". It was organized by the United Nations and my Government and sponsored by various other countries. The President of the Republic of Macedonia, Kiro Gligorov, together with many other prominent officials and competent academicians, took part in the seminar. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali sent an interesting message to the participants of the seminar. In it, he stressed, among other things, that the best result of diplomacy is the reduction of tension before it turns into conflict. In his opinion, that is not always possible, but it is better to prevent the eruption of conflicts through early warnings, quiet diplomacy and, if necessary, the preventive deployment of peace forces, than to act after the eruption of conflict. It would be useful if the Secretariat were to distribute the documents from this seminar to the First Committee.

The maintenance of international security and, in that context, the prevention of the violent disintegration of States, bearing in mind what is happening and what could happen in the future, is a subject which requires responsible, competent and organized deliberation in the First Committee. The prevention of the violent disintegration of States, which could pose a very serious threat to international peace and security in the future, will generate huge, real — I stress the word "real" — results in the disarmament process and a vast quantity of arms will thus become unnecessary.

That effort will likewise generate positive attitudes in all fields of international cooperation and in the internal development of States, particularly since that effort requires the democratic development of society and the observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion. It also requires the observance of international law in international cooperation and the practice of good-neighbourliness for the solution of unresolved questions.

We believe that an active approach by the General Assembly against the eruption of conflicts, particularly against the violent disintegration of States, is a true need for our Organization.

In view of all this, my delegation is working on a draft resolution by which the General Assembly will decide to discuss the subject of the maintenance of international security and the prevention of violent disintegration of States at its fifty-third session. We believe that this effort by the General Assembly will make an important contribution to the enhancement of international peace and security and to the economic and social advancement of all peoples. It will be a significant step towards real disarmament and the reduction of the present huge quantities of armaments. The nature of the draft resolution we intend to present will be a procedural one, without financial implications, to be adopted by consensus.

Efforts to meet last year's General Assembly call to complete the work on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), with a view to its signature at the beginning of this year's session, were dominant on this year's disarmament agenda. With some difficulty, this was done. My delegation was a sponsor of the relevant resolution. In the next few days, we are going to sign the Treaty and we will encourage our Parliament to ratify it as soon as possible.

The fact is that we have achieved very important results in the disarmament process that are beneficial to nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States alike. All five nuclear-weapon States have adopted the Treaty. The most important thing for the non-nuclear-weapon States is the spirit — and I stress the word "spirit" — of the CTBT. This spirit is without doubt in favour of the position that no one should possess nuclear arms in the future.

The efforts to see the Chemical Weapons Convention enter into force and to give teeth to the Biological Weapons Convention should receive our utmost attention. The efforts of my delegation in this area will not be lacking here or in other international forums.

My delegation will, in following tradition, give the highest attention to our work in the field of conventional armaments, particularly because in my country's region the quantity of armaments is way beyond that necessary for defence purposes and because of the existence of various unresolved problems among States. It is very important to continue to insist on the transparency of the production, stockpiling and trade of these armaments. The region would be much more secure if all States were aware of the present situation of conventional weapons in our region. The lack of awareness creates suspicions that could result in the undertaking of activities contrary to the development of good-neighbourly relations.

Last year, my delegation was a sponsor of the resolution on small arms. We are pleased that it generated much interest and numerous activities. The process of micro-disarmament deserves maximum attention and we are convinced that we will be able to show concrete results in the future. Mali, for example, deserves full recognition.

In the coming period, everything possible should be done with regard to the banning of anti-personal landmines. We would like to congratulate Canada for its initiative. We nevertheless think that priority should be given to the de-mining process. The remarks of the representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina some days ago were quite convincing. The large number of landmines planted in many parts of the world should be removed. Most of the countries in which landmines were planted are victims of past conflicts and are unable to do the de-mining by themselves. The international community should therefore help them and should participate in the de-mining.

Before I conclude my statement, I take great satisfaction in underlining the fact that the entire southern hemisphere of our planet has been embraced by a nuclear-weapon-free zone. This development has been positively assessed by all nuclear States. I hope that future efforts in this direction will enjoy as much success.

As I mentioned at the beginning of my statement, our Committee will be quite busy in the days to come. My delegation will endeavour to make its own contribution.

Mr. Hasan (Bahrain) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to extend to you, Sir, on behalf of my delegation, our sincere congratulations on your unanimous election to the chairmanship of this Committee. We trust that your experience and diplomatic skills will contribute effectively to the successful outcome of our work. I should also like to pay tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Erdenechuluun, for his able stewardship of this Committee at the fiftieth session.

With the end of the cold war, a new, inchoate international order emerged. We note with satisfaction that over the past two years some important developments have taken place in this newly relaxed international arena. While certain outstanding issues have been resolved, new challenges have emerged at the regional and international levels. These new challenges must be addressed.

Following long and arduous negotiations, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was adopted by the General Assembly on 10 September 1996, in resolution 50/245. One hundred and twenty-five countries have signed and one has ratified the Treaty since it was opened for signature on 24 September, inspiring new hope that humanity may fulfil its dream of the total elimination of nuclear weapons and their evils.

It is regrettable, however, that the Treaty did not set a specific time-frame or contain a solemn pledge to dismantle all of these weapons. However, as the efforts of the international community since the late 1950s have borne fruit in this Treaty, there is cause for optimism that, with persistent effort, this noble goal will be reached one day.

Almost a year and a half has now elapsed since the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Yet, 25 years after its entry into force, this Treaty is still not universally accepted. Here, we would appeal to all States that have not yet joined this Treaty to do so.

Israel's refusal to accede to the NPT and to subject its nuclear installations to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards regime has destabilized and threatened regional security in the Middle East and diminished the international character of the Treaty. It is in fact a serious impediment to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region. Israel's persistence in pursuing its nuclear programme and in developing its delivery systems defies the will of the international community on this matter, despite repeated calls by the General Assembly through a series of resolutions since 1974 — the most recent of which was resolution 50/66 — despite Security Council resolution 487 (1981) and despite decisions by other international conferences — most recently the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the NPT. That resolution noted with concern the existence in the Middle East of unsafeguarded nuclear facilities, and called on all States of the region that have not yet done so to accede to the Treaty as soon as possible and to place their nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards. This is a prerequisite for serious efforts to make the Middle East region a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Ultimately, such a zone would be the best guarantee for establishing a just, lasting and comprehensive peace, free of the nuclear weapons that are a source of terror and intimidation to all States in the region.

We believe that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones consolidates both regional and global security. To that end, the States of a given region must reach mutually agreed arrangements in which they recognize the general principles of international law and the norms of international behaviour. Such recognition would make a valuable contribution to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, but would not be a substitute for full accession to the NPT, which remains the cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation system.

Security Council resolution 984 (1995) on security assurances to non-nuclear weapon States against nuclear weapons gives us hope for a future Treaty that will guarantee the sovereignty and independence of non-nuclear-weapon States and ensure that the nuclear-weapon States will desist from the use or threat of use of such weapons.

In this context, we underscore the importance of the Advisory Opinion issued by the International Court of Justice on 8 July last, despite the fact that it was inconclusive on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons. That Opinion nonetheless confirmed the pledges of the nuclear-weapon States to pursue in good faith negotiations towards reaching effective arrangements to eliminate such weapons.

The Convention on Chemical Weapons is about to enter into force, more than three years after its opening for signature. It is regrettable that non-ratification by the two States that possess the largest stockpiles of such weapons should foil the hopes and aspirations generated when the Treaty was opened for signature. It is our hope that these two States will soon take the correct and necessary steps in this direction.

The illicit transfer and use of conventional weapons and small arms, including ammunition, explosives and related materials, and the illicit trafficking in and possession of such weapons, are causes for serious concern for us, especially when such *matériel* falls into the hands of groups that have no respect for human life or for the right of every human being to live in peace and security. While we express our commitment to General Assembly resolution 49/75 M, adopted on 15 December 1994 and entitled "Measures to curb the illicit transfer and use of conventional arms", we support the effort undertaken by the United Nations Disarmament Commission to develop the necessary guidelines for implementing concrete measures that would prevent the delivery of arms and explosives to those who use such *matériel* for destabilizing Governments and to spread violence and terrorism in their societies, with serious implications for national and regional security. It might be appropriate at this point to work towards concluding an international agreement to prohibit illicit trade in such weapons.

Anti-personnel landmines constitute a grave threat to the life of innocent human beings. Their potential harmful effects can last for many years in the areas in which they are planted. Clearing them requires enormous financial resources and concerted international action. In this regard, we support efforts aimed at mobilizing the international community in order to make progress on a legally binding and verifiable international agreement that imposes a total ban on the use, production and export of landmines. We commend the efforts made by some States to institute

unilateral bans on the production and export of these weapons, and we commend and express our appreciation to the Canadian Government for hosting the international Conference on landmines held in Ottawa from 3 to 5 October 1996.

In this context, the State of Bahrain supports the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. In the course of the preparatory work to that effect, a specific agenda for disarmament that covers the period ahead must be developed.

Reinforcement of confidence-building measures among States; adherence to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and the rule of international law; respect for the sovereignty and independence of States and their political systems, and non-interference in their domestic affairs; peaceful settlement of disputes through negotiations: combined, these constitute a sound foundation for a world free of war, a world in which peace, security and harmony prevail. The State of Bahrain, which is fully committed to these principles, hopes to gain the international community's support for its candidacy for membership of the Security Council for the period 1998-99, during the next session of the General Assembly. We pledge to contribute effectively to the promotion of global peace and security.

Mr. Koirala (Nepal): My delegation offers you, Sir, warm congratulations on your election as Chairman of this important Committee and assures you of its fullest cooperation. We also congratulate other members of the Bureau. I should like also to thank the former Chairman, Ambassador Erdenechuluun of Mongolia.

The Committee is meeting at a time when the climate for international peace and security remains positive. Last year, we saw the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) extended indefinitely. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) was adopted and opened for signature last month. We believe that these events have brought us another step closer to our dream of a nuclear-weapon-free world. In addition, my country, Nepal, signed the Treaty, demonstrating once again its commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The Chemical Weapons Convention is about to come into force. Earnest attempts to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention are under way. Similarly, international support for halting the production, use and transfer of conventional weapons and anti-personnel landmines continues to grow. Taken together, these events reflect the determination of international community to achieve general and complete disarmament.

The CTBT is not an end in itself. The international community has to travel much farther. During the post-CTBT period both the nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States should act with increased responsibility in order to translate into reality our commitment under article VI of the NPT. The logical step, in our view, should therefore be to start negotiations on a treaty on the elimination of nuclear weapons in a reasonable and agreed time-frame. If the international community can agree to conclude legally binding Conventions on chemical and biological weapons, there is no reason why a treaty on the elimination of nuclear weapons cannot be concluded as well.

The conclusion of such a treaty has become all the more important in the light of the recent advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. The Court unanimously ruled that

> "There exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control." (*A/51/4, para. 182*)

My delegation believes that the adoption of a treaty on a time-bound elimination of nuclear weapons is possible. We hope that the necessary steps in this direction will be taken, particularly by the nuclear-weapon States. In this context, the programme of action for the phased reduction of nuclear weapons proposed by 28 Non-Aligned Movement and neutral countries can form an important framework. The programme of action, to which my country has already given its support, offers a wide range of options for the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons from the face of the earth. We believe also that it is legitimate to demand a legally binding commitment by the nuclear-weapon States not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. Of equal importance in this field is the conclusion of a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for use in nuclear weapons. My delegation therefore joins its voice to the call for an immediate resumption of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty in the Conference on Disarmament in order to keep the momentum of the nuclear disarmament process going.

The devastating and indiscriminate killing power of other weapons of mass destruction is a matter of continuing concern. The international community must give equal attention to the elimination of such weapons. I mentioned

earlier that the Chemical Weapons Convention is on the verge of entering into force. That Convention is an effective example of how a whole range of weapons of mass destruction can be eliminated. We are encouraged by the international attention this Convention has received; however, we believe, as do others, that the Convention will be more effective when it is ratified by the major chemical-weapon Powers. We hope and are confident that the coming days will see our aspiration become reality.

Together with weapons of mass destruction, conventional weapons continue to pose a threat to international peace and security. This category of weapons has, more than any other, caused untold deaths and misery throughout history. The illicit trafficking in such weapons has added fuel to the conflicts in many regions of the world. Nepal therefore supports measures geared towards stemming the illicit trafficking in such arms, through bilateral, regional and international cooperation. We welcome in this regard the adoption by the United Nations Disarmament Commission of guidelines for international arms transfers, with particular reference to illicit trafficking in arms. Also, Nepal, as always, extends its support to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. A continuing participant in the Register, Nepal urges other countries to join it as soon as possible.

As regards the scourge of anti-personnel landmines, my delegation shares the universal concern expressed by representatives. Nepal is committed to a total ban on such landmines, which continue not only to kill and mutilate thousands of innocent civilians, but also to hinder the economic and social reconstruction of the regions affected. Therefore, we fully support a treaty banning the production, stockpiling, use and transfer of anti-personnel landmines for all time.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones, in our view, contribute greatly to the process of global disarmament and non-proliferation. Nepal therefore salutes the people of Africa, South-East Asia, Latin America and the South Pacific region, who have come a long way in agreeing to make their respective regions nuclear-weapon-free zones. We are confident that the coming years will see such zones extend to more and more regions and subregions of the world. We earnestly hope that our efforts to establish such nuclear-weapon-free zones in our region of South Asia and in the Middle East will one day be blessed with success. The establishment and consolidation of nuclear-weapon-free zones provide a strong impetus to the international community to further devote itself to the goal of ridding the world of nuclear weapons. In this regard, we welcome the support of the nuclear-weapon States for these important regional confidence-building efforts.

Lack of mutual trust has a great deal to do with the prevailing conflicts in many parts of the world. It is in this context that initiatives for confidence-building become important. Such measures, we believe, help build confidence among people by dispelling persistent mistrust. The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, known as the Kathmandu Centre, stands to serve that very purpose. The Centre organizes seminars and conferences on topical issues of peace, security and disarmament, whose outcomes have proved to be of great value in the global disarmament campaign.

I wish to reaffirm my country's strong support for the Centre. We are ready to honour our commitment as host country in order to make it an essential promoter of dialogue on regional peace and disarmament in the Asia and Pacific region. I should like also to thank all the countries that have supported the Centre financially and to renew my appeal for greater voluntary contributions to maintain its financial health.

Mr. Hoffmann (Germany), Chairman of the Disarmament Commission: Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your election. I am pleased to see you in the Chair, ensuring the smooth functioning of the Committee.

In my capacity as the current Chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, I have the honour to introduce the report (A/51/42) of the Commission for its 1996 session. As in previous years, the report consists of four chapters and annexes, containing the results of its deliberations on various disarmament items on the agenda during the 1996 substantive session. Chapter IV sets out the conclusions and reports of the subsidiary bodies, which duly reflect the status of the Commission's deliberations on various disarmament issues at the 1996 session.

The Disarmament Commission organized its 1996 session in accordance with the mandate set forth in paragraph 118 of the Final Document of the 1978 first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, as well as with the guidelines set by the reform programme entitled "Ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission", which was unanimously adopted by the Commission in 1990.

It should be pointed out that for the 1996 substantive session, the Commission, at its organizational session, decided to include only two substantive items on its agenda. They are: first, "International arms transfers, with particular reference to General Assembly resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991"; and secondly, "Exchange of views on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament". Two Working Groups were established to deal with these agenda items.

Working Group I, on the item regarding international arms transfers, was able to agree on a set of guidelines on the subject. All delegations hailed the successful conclusion of the guidelines, which were considered particularly timely given the current turbulent regional situation. The guidelines provide a programme of action for reducing licit arms transfers and eradicating illicit arms trafficking. They constitute a step in charting a new course for dealing with micro-disarmament in general. The text also establishes a balance between the legitimate right to acquire arms for self-defence and the potentially destabilizing consequences of arms transfers. The guidelines stress not only the importance of strict national legislative and administrative measures and the application of compatible standards among national systems, but also the important role that the United Nations can play in this field. They further recognize the equal responsibility of supplier and recipient countries. States receiving arms have the responsibility to ensure that their imports are commensurate with their legitimate self-defence and security requirements, and supplier States have the equal responsibility to ensure that their exports do not contribute to instability. A balance between the commercial dimension of arms transfers and the consideration of international security and regional stability also was emphasized in the guidelines.

Working Group II held an extensive exchange of views in a positive and constructive atmosphere on the question of convening a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV). The need to hold such a session to carry out a comprehensive review of progress in the post-cold-war era was generally recognized. Non-Aligned Movement countries advocated convening the session soon, in 1997 if possible, while the European Union and the United States stressed the importance of careful preparation and identification of the objectives to be achieved in order to ensure the success of SSOD IV.

With respect to the organization of work of the Commission in 1996, I am grateful to note that, with the cooperation of all delegations, the Commission was able to finalize procedural and organizational matters prior to the substantive session. In this regard, the pre-session consultations proved to be extremely useful and contributed greatly to the organization of the work of the Commission this year. Regrettably, however, as many delegations pointed out, the Commission failed to reach agreement on a third substantive item for the session.

Another organizational issue concerns the number of substantive agenda items for the 1997 session of the Commission. Since one of the two substantive items was concluded this year, proposals will have to be formulated for consideration at the forthcoming organizational session of the Commission in December. For this reason, a special consultation group has been set up under the chairmanship of Indonesia. Intensive consultations will therefore be required at this session of the General Assembly so that a final decision can be made at the Commission's organizational session.

Finally, I should not fail to express my gratitude to all delegations for their understanding and the businesslike manner in which they conducted the work of the Commission this year. Special tribute should be paid to the members of the Bureau of the Commission, in particular the eight Vice-Chairmen; the Rapporteur of the Commission, Mr. Rajab Sukayri of Jordan; and the Chairmen of the two Working Groups, namely, Mr. Gheorghe Chirila of Romania and Ambassador Luvsangiin Erdenechuluun of Mongolia, for their full cooperation and hard work in carrying out the tasks entrusted to them by the Commission. On behalf of the Commission, I also thank the staff of the Centre for Disarmament Affairs for their valuable assistance, and particularly the Director of the Centre, Mr. Prvoslav Davinic; the Secretary of the Disarmament Commission, Mr. Kuo-Chung Lin; and their colleagues who served as the secretaries of the two Working Groups. On behalf of the Commission, I express my sincere appreciation to all other members of the Secretariat who assisted the Commission in carrying out its task.

With this explanation, I present the annual report of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, as contained in document A/51/42.

The Chairman: The Committee takes note of the report of the Disarmament Commission.

Mr. Ovia (Papua New Guinea): As this is the first time that my delegation has spoken at this session, let me at the outset congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the

chairmanship of this Committee. My country is delighted to see you preside over this very important Committee at this session of the General Assembly, and I should like also to congratulate the other members of your Bureau. My delegation also wishes to convey, through you, our sincere gratitude and appreciation for the work of the former Chairman of this Committee, the Ambassador of Mongolia, who diligently guided the work of the Committee during the occasion of the United Nations fiftieth anniversary.

Despite the end of the cold war, international peace and security have not been fully achieved. My country firmly believes that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones at the regional level will build confidence and provide an opportunity for many non-nuclear-weapon States to continue to combat the proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. In this regard, Papua New Guinea welcomed the recent signing on 25 March 1996 of the relevant Protocols of the South Pacific Nuclear-Free Zone Treaty — the Treaty of Rarotonga — by nuclear Powers France, United Kingdom and the United States of America. Papua New Guinea believes that by doing so, these nuclear-weapon States have consciously agreed to stop all forms of nuclear testing, manufacturing and stockpiling, as well as the trans-shipment of nuclear wastes to and from the South Pacific region.

The conclusion of regional treaties around the globe is very impressive indeed. My country wishes to commend the good work represented by the Treaty of Tlatelolco for Latin America and the Caribbean, and we call on other regional groups to follow this example. Papua New Guinea also welcomes the signing in Cairo on 11 April 1996 of the Treaty of Pelindaba, establishing the African nuclear-weapon-free zone. The decision of nuclear-weapon States finally to cooperate in that region should be followed with visible programmes and actions aimed at eradicating the regional proliferation of nuclear weapons.

My delegation is also heartened by current developments in South-East Asia. The conclusion in December 1995 of negotiations on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty will further enhance peace and security in the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) region — a region with which my country is closely associated.

Papua New Guinea also welcomes the proposal of Brazil aimed at creating and regulating a nuclear-weapon free-zone in the southern hemisphere. Papua New Guinea strongly believes that the conclusion of this treaty will form an important foundation upon which the international community can build in order collectively to move towards attaining the objectives of nuclear disarmament and global peace and security.

Having read the records and heard the current debate on disarmament, which has progressed to new heights, we should, however, bear in mind that the dangers of past nuclear testing have not been adequately addressed. In this regard, my delegation would like to align itself with the statement made by the Ambassador of the Republic of the Marshall Islands. Papua New Guinea will continue to stress that a lot more work needs to be done properly to repair the damage caused by the nuclear-testing programmes of certain super-Powers. In the South Pacific region and in other regions of the world, there exist communities that to this day still suffer from exposure to nuclear radiation and other effects of nuclear testing. Most of these countries and their peoples will continue to live under severe conditions and to suffer grave diseases for a long time. For instance, the people of the Republic of the Marshall Islands continue to suffer from the effects of past nuclear-testing programmes. The nightmare still torments — and will continue to torment — innocent victims, including women and children. The nuclear-weapon States know as well as we do that the consequences of atomic radiation will have a long-lasting effect on human lives as well as on other biological life-forms and ecological formations of the once-peaceful region of the Pacific.

Similarly, the recent cessation of French nuclear testing in French Polynesia does not guarantee the people of Tahiti any assurances that they will live safely on the islands, as they had done for many generations. The impact on the seabed and coral reefs and the general disturbance and displacement of the marine ecosystem threatens the very livelihood of the people of these islands.

Many of us have signed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). There is no better way to move forward than to request the nuclear-weapon Powers to embark on some serious and long-term reconstruction programmes. There is no point in applauding the progress of the CTBT while the socio-economic well-being of the victims of these awful practices remains in jeopardy. Papua New Guinea does not hesitate to call on the United States and France to reconsider and review their reconstruction programmes, as well as to establish new and effective mechanisms directly to address the concerns of the islanders. Long-term and appropriate compensation payments and remedies for these people are warranted due to the destruction of their very sources of subsistence and economic survival. A thorough clean-up of the old sites and

their constant and systematic monitoring in order to inform the inhabitants of any imminent dangers are only a few of the important areas requiring immediate cooperation.

Papua New Guinea, which signed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) on 25 September 1996, was among the first 70 countries to do so. We concur, however, with the views expressed by India, Malaysia and Indonesia that the current framework of the CTBT critically fails to link the Treaty language with the universal objective of achieving complete and total disarmament within a given time-frame. We believe that the CTBT cannot be seen in isolation from the total overall goal of achieving the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

The notion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty to us implies the total elimination of all nuclear tests, including atmospheric, underground, computer-simulated and outer-space testing, and a comprehensive clean-up operation after these tests. My Prime Minister raised these very concerns during his address to the plenary of the General Assembly. This issue was also cited by other speakers as a critical flaw in the Treaty.

Despite these limitations, Papua New Guinea co-sponsored the resolution on the CTBT when it was introduced in the General Assembly in order to maintain the momentum of, and confidence in, overall global disarmament efforts. A contrary action would have been a step backwards.

In this connection, my delegation supports the initiative taken by the Arab Republic of Egypt in drafting a resolution for consideration and adoption by the General Assembly that calls on the Conference on Disarmament to move forward with negotiations on a treaty for the elimination of all nuclear weapons.

Permit me to touch briefly on the recent advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons. The International Court of Justice, in an opinion that is considered historic and landmark, confirmed that the threat or use of nuclear weapons would violate international law. The court stressed that

> "There exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control." (*A/51/4, para. 182*)

It is very enlightening to note such foresight on the part of this highest legal authority. It is my country's firm conviction that the international community should adhere to the spirit and intent of this important opinion. Papua New Guinea is convinced that we should refrain from unnecessary legal polemics and go straight into the real business of eliminating all nuclear weapons.

The position of the International Court of Justice is very clear: There is an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. Violations of these norms bypass the rules not only of customary international law but also of the Geneva and Hague Conventions.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to reiterate that the international community has the obligation to uphold the opinion handed down by the International Court of Justice. Full cooperation from both the nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States will ensure a better future for all of us and for future generations.

Miss Tolle (Kenya): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your well-deserved election. I wish to assure you of my delegation's support as you steer the work of this Committee to its successful and expected conclusion.

Many urgent issues relevant to the work of this Committee — be they in the field of nuclear disarmament, conventional disarmament or disarmament and development — need our attention. Progress has been made in many areas; for example, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction will soon enter into force; the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) recently received a new lease on life; and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) already has over 120 signatories. My country is taking the necessary steps to append its signature to that important instrument.

However, a lot more needs to be done in many other areas. Landmines continue to wreak havoc in many areas of the world; the illicit transfer of conventional arms continues unabated; toxic and radioactive wastes continue to find their way to our shores and waters; and the insecurity linked to poverty and underdevelopment continues to haunt us.

This year will be remembered for the progress made towards nuclear disarmament and, in our view, towards the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons from the face of the earth. It is in that spirit that we participated in the negotiations on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in Geneva, and subsequently supported General Assembly resolution 50/245 (1996), which adopted the CTBT and thereby opened it for signature.

While it is commendable that despite the many misgivings about the CTBT we have taken the first crucial step forward, it is now the duty of all of us to go beyond it and build on the existing momentum. Kenya, like many other like-minded countries, believes that the CTBT must be seen as the beginning of a process that will eventually free us from the insecurity and fear associated with nuclear weapons.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is an exceptionally important global mechanism for addressing nuclear non-proliferation issues. In this regard, the signing in Cairo on 11 April 1996 by 45 African States and four nuclear-weapon States of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, also known as the Pelindaba Treaty, is a historic event that we are confident will contribute to the non-proliferation regime.

The Treaties of Pelindaba, Rarotonga, Tlatelolco and Bangkok fortify the commitments of their signatories to nuclear disarmament. Kenya affirms its belief in such regional agreements as a useful means of reducing tension, encouraging sustainable socio-economic development, promoting confidence and enhancing regional stability and security. These agreements are also intended to encourage peaceful uses of nuclear technology and should, to that extent, be used as vehicles for the transfer of technology.

In this connection, we support the initiative of the delegation of Brazil to promote a nuclear-free zone in the southern hemisphere. We are convinced that nuclear technology will play an instrumental role in the socio-economic sphere and in this regard look forward with anticipation and hope to the sixth Review Conference of the States parties to the NPT.

Kenya also looks forward to the commencement of negotiations on a convention on fissile material cut-off. We reaffirm our support to the mandate already agreed upon, which calls for the establishment of an ad hoc committee to negotiate a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty. Such a treaty would, in addition, have to be truly comprehensive and address the concerns of those of us who believe that our common security is based on, among other factors, a nuclear-free world. In this respect, Kenya supports the convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Kenya welcomes the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the threat or use of nuclear weapons. We hope that the advisory opinion will be adopted at this session of the General Assembly and that together with Security Council resolution 984 (1995) it will form the moral basis for the work of the ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament that the Conference on Disarmament has been mandated to establish.

Kenya is a co-sponsor of the programme of action presented to the Conference on Disarmament in August 1996 by 28 delegations members of the Group of 21. We are convinced that the proposed programme of action provides the most logical approach to further progress in our pursuit of complete nuclear disarmament.

Although international support for the Chemical Weapons Convention continues to grow, Kenya is concerned that it has yet to receive the clear endorsement of the two declared chemical-weapon States. We urge the two States to demonstrate their commitment to the Chemical Weapons Convention through expeditious, positive action.

I now wish to turn to an issue of extreme importance that has been a source of tragedy and nightmares to the entire international community, namely conventional weapons with specific reference to landmines. Landmines have the effect not just of mutilating, killing and maiming civilians, especially innocent women and children, but also of rendering whole agricultural areas physically uninhabitable and economically unproductive. The wanton destruction caused by landmines is unacceptable. States that produce and sell these agents of death should be held accountable and must, as a matter of urgency, stop the production and sale of these evil creations and assist in clearing the affected areas. Talk about smart and dumb mines should not even be contemplated. In our opinion, the effects of smart mines on civilians will remain exactly the same, causing death and destruction wherever they are planted.

Kenya welcomes the efforts of like-minded States on this issue and commends the Government of Canada for organizing the recent International Strategy Conference. We support the objectives set by that Conference and look

forward to a time when the production, use, stockpiling and transfer of all kinds of landmines will be a thing of the past. Kenya hopes that the victims of landmines will not be the forgotten people of our world.

Similarly, we are concerned about the continuing illicit transfer and use of conventional arms, which constitute a major cause of insecurity in many regions of the world, particularly in developing countries. We therefore support all attempts being made to curtail such illicit movements of arms, in particular to regions where conflicts and civil strife persist. We encourage the countries that engage in such transfers of arms, especially to organizations involved in internal conflicts, to desist from such actions which ultimately threaten international peace and security.

The dumping of radioactive and toxic wastes on the shores and in the waters of some developing countries continues to be a cause of concern. The tragedy herein is two-fold: first, a section of our global village produces more waste than it can treat and chooses insensitively to dump it elsewhere; secondly, the dumping ground is totally unprepared to handle such wastes in terms of both technological know-how, which it desperately lacks, and resources, which it has never had. In addition, such wastes dumped indiscriminately cause untold harm to the environment, livelihood and health of the people. In spite of what some in the North might think, there is need to address this issue comprehensively and as soon as possible. In this respect, Kenya welcomes the amendment to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal adopted in Geneva that prohibits the exports of such wastes from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries to non-OECD countries as a step in the right direction, but contends that more needs to be done.

It is clear that any achievements in the field of disarmament, both nuclear and conventional, will allow us to focus on more crucial matters pertaining to our socio-economic development. We must all make concerted efforts to break the cycle of poverty and debt burden that continues to engulf us now, compounding the breakdown in law and order and promoting ethnic strife and conflict in many parts of the world.

We cannot allow massive resources to continue to be channelled to armament. Disarmament should therefore free some of the tied-up resources for development purposes. Let us strive towards that end as we approach the next millennium.

Introduction and consideration of draft resolutions submitted on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chairman: I now call on the representative of Hungary, who will introduce draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.2.

Mr Tóth (Hungary): On behalf of the sponsors, I would like to introduce today draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.2 on the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction.

The following 44 States are sponsors of the draft resolution: Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Russian Federation, Singapore, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.

The draft resolution notes with satisfaction that there are 139 States parties to the Convention, including all the permanent members of the Security Council. It recalls the General Assembly's resolution adopted without a vote at the forty-eighth session, in which it commended the final report of the Ad Hoc Group of Governmental Experts to Identify and Examine Potential Verification Measures from a Scientific and Technical Standpoint, agreed to by consensus at the Ad Hoc Group's last meeting at Geneva on 24 September 1993.

The draft resolution recalls further the General Assembly's resolution adopted without a vote at the forty-ninth session, in which it welcomed the final report of the Special Conference of the States Parties to the Convention held in September 1994, adopted by consensus, in which the States parties agreed to establish an ad hoc group, open to all States parties, whose objective would be to consider appropriate measures, including possible verification measures, and draft proposals to strengthen the Convention, to be included, as appropriate, in a legally binding instrument to be submitted for the consideration of the States parties.

The draft resolution recalls the exchange of information and data agreed to in the Final Declaration of

the Third Review Conference, as well as the provisions of the Convention related to scientific and technological cooperation and the related provisions of the final report of the Ad Hoc Group of Governmental Experts, the final report of the Special Conference of the States Parties to the Convention and the Final Documents of the Review Conferences.

In its operative part, the draft resolution welcomes the progress made by the Ad Hoc Group in pursuing the mandate established by the Special Conference and urges the Ad Hoc Group, in order to fulfil its mandate, to intensify its work with a view to completing it as soon as possible before the commencement of the Fifth Review Conference and submit its report, which shall be adopted by consensus, to the States parties, to be considered at a special conference.

It requests the Secretary-General to continue to render the necessary assistance to the depository Governments of the Convention and to provide such services as may be required for the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the Review Conferences, as well as the decisions contained in the Final Report of the Special Conference, including all necessary assistance to the Ad Hoc Group.

It welcomes the convening, at the request of the States parties, of the Fourth Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention at Geneva from 25 November to 6 December 1996.

Finally, the draft resolution calls upon all signatory States that have not yet ratified the Convention to do so without delay, and also calls upon those other States that have not signed the Convention to become parties thereto at an early date, thus contributing to the achievement of universal adherence to the Convention.

It is the hope of the sponsors that additional delegations will render their support to the draft by joining in sponsoring the draft resolution on the Biological Weapons Convention.

Organization of work

The Chairman: I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that, in accordance with the programme of work and timetable we have adopted, the deadline for submission of draft resolutions will be Thursday, 29 October. In this regard, I would like to urge concerned delegations to submit their draft resolutions as soon a possible in order to facilitate the processing of these documents by the Secretariat, in particular drafts on traditional agenda items that have been discussed for many years.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.